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The New REPUBLIC

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The New REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

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The Week

IT CAN be said of William Howard Taft that at the moment when he leaves the Supreme Court his reputation with the American people is undoubtedly higher than ever before. His term as President saw a steady diminution in his prestige which was reflected in the dismal failure of his candidacy in 1912, at a time when, according to the general political custom of America, he should have had an almost automatic reëlection. Since then, by his modesty, geniality and unflagging energy in his work, he has rehabilitated himself to an extent which no one would have ventured to predict eighteen years ago. If he has not been among the wisest and most profound members of the Court in interpreting legal principles to accord with changing conditions, neither has he been the most rigidly inflexible. We hope that, relieved from the burden of his duties as Chief Justice, he may be restored to health and may enjoy many more years of life.

WE need hardly say that Charles Evans Hughes is not the man the editors of The New Republic would have chosen out of all the available candidates as head of the country's most important court. Our criticism of Mr. Hughes' philosophy, and of many of his past official acts, has been made too often to need repetition here. The Supreme Court needs above all men of the broadest possible scholarship and practical wisdom, who do not regard the law as a self-contained discipline depending wholly on ancient precedent for the solution of new difficulties. On the wisdom of the Court as a whole depends, to a large degree, the capacity of our whole political system to deal with the gigantic problems of modern civilization. There are two specific objections to Mr. Hughes which are of great importance. He left the Court to run for office and has been to the present day an important figure in political life, a field of activity from which the judicial system should be rigidly separated. Also, his age is such that a lengthy tenure of office, which is particularly desirable in a Chief Justice, is unlikely. At the same time it is easy to see his acceptability, from the President's viewpoint, and certainly no one can ask an occupant of the White House to select men with whose outlook and sympathies he does not agree. The world, moreover, has moved very far in the fourteen years since Mr. Hughes resigned from the Supreme Court. We believe that he has also changed, and that he will be much more inclined in the future to recognize the need of new remedies for new problems than he was fourteen years ago.

THE wage truce asked by President Hoover has been broken by the largest cotton plant in the South—the Riverside and Dan River Cotton Mills at Danville, Va. It recently posted a notice that on February 1, wages would be cut 10 percent. Although it is stated that the "company union" in this plant sanctioned the reduction, this can offer no excuse for the action, since such organizations are usually under the control of the management. The same "union" voted for reductions amounting to 40 percent in 1920 and 10 percent in 1924. What is to be done to meet this challenge? It would seem that both the President and the leading industrialists who agreed to the truce are under a heavy obligation to demand in the most insistent way that this plant rescind the cut. Otherwise it may be said that the agreement was meaningless. Other employers may cite this precedent as a justification for action on their own part, while labor

may assert that there is no further bar to demands for increased wages. If the Southern textile mills are not morally bound by the wage truce, that can only be because they are already so far beyond the pale of civilized industry that even a temporary cessation in the guerilla warfare between them and their workers cannot be imagined.

THE income-tax figures for 1928, just published, reveal a startling increase in the number of large incomes, due chiefly to stock-market profits. Those receiving $5,000,000 or more numbered twenty-four, as against eleven in 1927. Those with $1,000,000 or more numbered 496, as against 290 in 1927. Aside from the general interest in these figures, the statistics published lead to two important conclusions. The first is that the current agitation for the abolition of the tax on capital gains rests on a very slender foundation. The argument by those who advocate repealing this tax is that it prevents persons who own stocks which have risen in value from selling their holdings and realizing their gains. Failure to realize in 1928, it is said, kept the stock market from suffering a normal reaction when the prices of shares began to get too high, and so led up to the terrific inflation of values in 1929, which culminated in the disastrous crash. But the income tax returns show that a large volume of realizing sales actually took place in 1928. About one-third of the net income going to those having incomes between $50,000 and $100,000, for instance, was derived from the sale of stocks or other capital assets. Those receiving $1,000,000 or more actually made about 58 percent of their gains from the sale of capital assets. There were obviously a great many persons who took their market profits in 1928, in spite of the tax.

THE other important conclusion from the 1928 income-tax figures concerns the effect of stock-market profits on the spending power of the customers and hence on industrial prosperity. The total profits received from the sale of stocks and other capital assets in 1928 were $4,786,512,711. We are justified in assuming that there were relatively few persons making stock-market profits who had incomes so small that they did not have to render a tax return. The total national income for 1928, *excluding* gains from the sale of assets, is estimated by the National Bureau of Economic Research as about $89,419,000,000. Thus, the part of the 1928 national income attributable to the sale of capital assets works out at a little over 5 percent. Reduction in the spending power of the public resulting from the market smash can be no larger than this. It can be as large as this only if we make the following unwarranted assumptions: first, that the *entire* gain resulted from the sale of stocks rather than being due partly to the sale of real estate, bonds, mortgages and other forms of capital; second, that none of this gain was used for further speculation, but that it was all spent for goods and services, thus stimulating production; third, that no net gains will be made from the sale of stocks in 1929. Allowances for these factors would undoubtedly reduce the estimate of the net loss in spending power consequent upon the present lack of a bull market by at least one-half. If the value of goods and services bought this year falls off by much more than 2 percent, we are justified in saying that the cause of this decline was not the market collapse, but other and more fundamental factors.

ECONOMISTS who study figures of wages are often puzzled to understand how, on the amounts paid, the families of American workers can maintain the high standards of living which they are supposed to enjoy. The answer ordinarily made to this puzzle is that we must consider not merely the individual wage, but the earnings of the whole family. Some light is thrown on these additional earnings by a study just published by the Women's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor, dealing with women in 5-and-10-cent stores and limited-price chain and department stores. Of the women so employed who reported, 92 percent lived with relatives, while 82 percent were single. Those under eighteen years of age constituted 28 percent of the total, those eighteen years and under twenty another 28 percent, and those twenty and under twenty-five made up 26 percent. Only 17 percent were twenty-five years and over, while but 8 percent were over thirty. It is fairly clear from these figures that here is a great and growing field which employs chiefly young, unmarried women living with their families. The median earnings of the women ranged between $8 and $12 a week. These earnings would scarcely enable a girl to support herself in most cities. But they would relieve a family with which she lived of part of the burden of supporting her, or, at the least, would enable her to attain a slightly higher standard of living than would otherwise be possible.

THE strike by members of the International Ladies' Garment Workers in the New York dress and waist industry, like the recent strike in the cloak industry, is peculiar in that it is approved by many of the better employers as well as by the union. These industries suffer a constant danger of disintegration by the drifting of work to small, irresponsible contractors, who do not maintain either fair prices or fair standards of labor and hours. The chaos into which the trade naturally slumps without strong control is injurious not merely to the workers, but to the large manufacturers. Every few years a mass movement of the workers seems to be called for to bring standards back again to a point which is not only essential to their welfare, but is a protection to the responsible employers. Without a strong and well organized union, the necessary discipline of the industry cannot be main-

tained. A strike of this kind need not be long and bitterly fought; it is a sort of sanitary measure which may be quickly effective if it is sufficiently thorough. The small employers have little power of resistance, while the larger ones are only too glad to agree to reasonable wages and working conditions if these can be maintained throughout the market. In the present instance, the necessity for the "organizing strike" has been much increased by the weakening which the union suffered from the effort of the communists to control it several years ago.

IN a recent statement to the press, Mr. Arthur L. Endicott, the comptroller of Harvard University, has placed in a somewhat better light the affair of the twenty scrubwomen, discharged because the Minimum Wage Commission declared their pay was too low. They were part-time workers, he explains, and did not depend solely on the University for their livelihood. They had been receiving vacations with pay, so that their thirty-five-cent hourly wage really equaled or exceeded the thirty-seven-cent standard set by the Massachusetts Minimum Wage Commission. They would have been replaced by men in any case, and the protest of the Commission merely hastened their dismissal. At the same time, it had always been intended to find them other employment, and places have now been offered by the University to all but two of the women it discharged.

SO runs his explanation, and it answers, if rather feebly, some of the sharper criticisms made in the press. The fact remains, however, that the richest university in the country has been paying what even a notoriously lenient wage commission considers to be less than a living wage. The fact remains that Harvard discharged twenty women without notice—even though, under pressure, it has hired some of them back. The fact remains that many of these women had served the University for more than twenty years, and were morally entitled to a pension. Finally, the fact remains that President Lowell, in the present instance as so often in the past, has shown a conspicuous disregard for public opinion. He likes to think of Harvard as a national university, and yet he speaks in the public-be-damned voice that one expects only from the manager of a selfish and grasping corporation.

THE Pope's encyclical on education, which was received in this country with very little comment, has aroused a new conflict in Jugoslavia. In that country, the Greek and the Roman Catholics are nearly equal in number. The former, favored by the government, are supreme in Old Serbia; the latter are strongest in the districts annexed from Austria-Hungary, and especially in the disaffected province of Croatia. At present the Greek Catholics claim that the Pope is attacking the Jugoslavian system of education. The Roman Catholics, denying this charge, assert that there is an attempt throughout the country to extinguish their own religion and to force everyone into the Orthodox Church. This is to be accomplished by the new school system—the aim of which, they believe, is to replace religious teaching by a national Fascist cult. They are especially irritated by the fact that while their own newspapers are censored, attacks on Roman Catholics are freely permitted. The Greek Orthodox, for their part, accuse them of preparing a *Kulturkampf*, a battle between church and state, in order to make the Croatian question a religious one and so undermine the new Jugoslavia. And it is asserted that some of the more extreme Serbian patriots look with complacency on the possibility of a foreign war, as the only means of imposing unity at home. Meanwhile the whole bitter conflict between Croats and Serbs, between Roman and Greek Catholics, between the old Serbian monarchy and its new subjects, shows once more the folly and futility of the methods adopted by the Peace Conference in reshaping the map of Europe.

LATE in November, Governor Young of California referred the Mooney case to his Advisory Pardon Board, asking it to examine the evidence and report to him. It was widely assumed at the time that he had made up his mind to set Mooney and Billings free, and used this device only to avoid taking on his own shoulders all the onus for an action which would be highly unpopular with some of California's tories. However, more than two months have gone by and these men are still in prison. The Board has not acted, although a few hours' time is all that anyone should need to convince himself that Mooney and Billings were railroaded to prison on perjured evidence when there was no reason whatever—beyond the hostility of San Francisco capitalists toward radical union men—to connect them with the crime of which they were accused. Mooney and Billings have been behind the bars thirteen years, years which California has stolen from them and can never give back. If Governor Young and his friends care nothing for justice—and there is as yet no evidence that they do—at least they should still be subject to the restraint of common human decency. How much longer must the agony be prolonged?

DURING the Great War, as everyone knows, civil rights were generally disregarded in the United States. The Department of Justice, under the cloak of patriotism, used any means it chose in order to ferret out enemies or imagined enemies of the republic. With the coming of peace, these disreputable practices were not discontinued. Wire-tapping, espionage and the use of *agents provocateurs* went on. A. Mitchell Palmer's "Red Raids" will forever remain a blot upon our history, while under the precious Daugherty, with the equally precious W. J. Burns as head of the Secret Service, the De-

partment sank, if anything, still lower; it did everything it could, for instance, to thwart the Senate investigations which uncovered the oil scandals and other iniquities of the Harding administration. Even down into Mr. Coolidge's time, the Department maintained a great spy system which it never explained or justified to the public.

IT is welcome news, therefore, that Attorney-General Mitchell has brought this aspect of the work down to a reasonable level. J. Edgar Hoover, the present head of the Bureau of Investigation, told the House sub-committee on appropriations the other day that wire-tapping is now strictly forbidden. Spies will no longer be planted in federal prisons, and it is known that their use in any connection is no longer countenanced. We do not need these methods; on the contrary, they constitute a threat to democratic government which a few years ago assumed serious proportions. It is to be hoped that they will not come back in the near future, when the work of enforcing prohibition is taken over from the Treasury.

The Kellogg Pact in the London Conference

A FEW weeks ago The New Republic published an article by Mr. E. C. Lindeman in which he criticized the methods used in recent international conferences. He pointed out that in such gatherings the delegates of the various powers do not as a rule come together in order to see how much progress they can make by mutual effort. Instead, they assemble like horse traders, each group trying to discover how much it can gain for itself out of a process by which it makes its initial demands as large as possible in order that after all the concessions have been made there shall still be a great deal left. It is almost inevitable that such a conference should make little real progress, and that this little, so to speak, should come by accident. The ambition of each group is likely to be the maintenance of the status quo, or as much of it as is possible, and progress results from the happy accident that each power will give up a little in the hope that the others can be jockeyed into giving up more.

Mr. Lindeman's description fits, with painful accuracy, the present stage of the London naval conference. Not even the system of checks and balances in the American Constitution is more elaborate than the series of contingencies embodied in the various proposals which each country is busily engaged in putting forth. The United States will scrap three battleships if Great Britain will scrap five. France will reduce her armament by 25 per cent if her security, which is already guaranteed in so many international documents, can be safeguarded in yet another. France wants navies considered on a basis of "global" tonnage, Great Britain seeks agreements on categories, so, as a compromise, it is proposed that global tonnage be allotted among the various types of vessels by percentages, and that each nation may review these somewhat for its own purposes, subject to the consent of all. The air is thick with offers, counter-offers, reports of concessions, denials of these reports.

All this is a long way from the atmosphere which existed when Hoover and MacDonald met on the Rapidan, and it is no doubt inevitable that this should be the case. A formal conference of five powers is very different from informal and confidential conversations between one President and one Prime Minister. Even when we have made all due allowance for such natural differences, however, we find the London conference proceeding at a dishearteningly low level. It is hard to believe that any great stroke for the betterment of all mankind can come out of such niggardly counting over of tons and guns. And nothing less than a great stroke will satisfy the expectations aroused by the President's Armistice Day speech when he promised, "It only remains for the others to say how low they will go. It cannot be too low for us."

The heart of the problem at London is, of course, the Kellogg Pact. The conferees are moving in two directions at once, in regard to it. The naval experts, with their balancing of forces, ignore its existence. Some of the political leaders, on the other hand, seek to implement it, and are willing to make extensive "sacrifices" of armament in order to bring that about. It cannot be said that the position of either group is illogical, from its own premises. The militarists say that force has always ruled the world from the dawn of history to the present moment. They want tangible evidence that there is now something else to take its place; and pending that evidence, they propose to go on as before. The tangible evidence is what the political leaders want to supply to them. Various attempts have already been made at it, from the League of Nations onward; but these have always been vitiated, from Europe's point of view, by the absence of the United States, which seems likely to play the same dominating role in the world politics of the twentieth century that Great Britain played in the nineteenth.

President Hoover is, therefore, confronted by a major crisis, and there is every reason to believe that he is well aware of it. He fears that if a treaty is written with any "political" aspect, the Senate will reject it; and yet he sees very well that unless the United States is prepared to go at least some distance toward implementing the Kellogg Pact, the London conference will either fail or will produce a success so feeble and disappointing that it will amount to failure. In view of the expectations aroused before the conference, such an outcome might jeopardize Mr. Hoover's whole career as President.

Is there a way out of the dilemma? Commonsense would seem to suggest the effort to find a "political" concession which would both be a basis for real reduction at London and acceptable to American public opinion. Much would depend, to be sure, upon the manner in which the offer was made. A courageous and inspiring attitude on the part of Mr. Hoover would go far toward winning success, on both sides of the Atlantic. As for the nature of the proposal, it seems fairly obvious. The United States will not bind itself in advance to any specific course of action. It is opposed to active measures of coercion, the sanctions of the League of Nations which are so much talked about but are never practised. What the United States can do, is to make an agreement similar in general terms to the Four-Power Pact in the Pacific. Such a promise would not seriously limit our future freedom of action; it should not frighten even the worst isolationist unless he is the victim of a case of chronic hysteria. At the same time, it would add sufficient American weight to the world effort against aggressive warfare to checkmate the militarists who now assert that this effort has no importance. The New Republic hopes that President Hoover will act, will act vigorously, and before the conference has drifted hopelessly into the doldrums of petty bargaining in horse-trader terms.

Nullification at Home

REPRESENTATIVE Franklin Fort of New Jersey has thrown another issue into the prohibition debate by contending that neither the law nor the courts forbid the manufacture of home brew for domestic consumption so long as it is non-intoxicating in fact. This, he declares, offers a possible *modus vivendi* between the Wets and the Drys. The Wets, if they want to drink, should be content with what they can make, while allowing the Drys to suppress the commercial manufacture and sale of liquor.

There is something to be said for Mr. Fort's position. We do not know what may be the correct legalistic interpretation of the Volstead Act, but we do know that he has pointed out a practice valid by general consent of the enforcement agencies themselves. The making of alcoholic beverages in the home is a common pursuit, and persists widely even in country districts which are politically Dry. Farmers have had their cider ever since the land was settled, and no skill is required to provide it with an alcoholic content. Recipes for other beverages handed down from generation to generation, are generally used and are even improved and varied. And in the ten years of prohibition enforcement, nobody has been punished for allowing the processes of nature to take their course in the cellar or the kitchen, or for possessing or using the result. For the government to add to its already insupportable burden of suppressing traffic in liquor the gigantic one of policing every home is simply inconceivable, and would scarcely be attempted by even the most ardent Dry.

The real trouble with Mr. Fort's contention is that there seems no good reason for limiting personal liberty in the matter to the use of home-made beverages. Why is it any more injurious or reprehensible for a person to drink the product of a commercial process than that of his own handicraft? It may be argued that, under the present regime of prohibition evasion, the commercial article is likely to be inferior or even poisonous, but the contrary may also be argued. And if the government's chief concern were with the quality of beverages, prohibition would not be its logical action. The only sound argument for encouraging handicraft production for use as opposed to factory production for profit would be the sort of argument which may be applied to other commodities as well. Why not prohibit us from buying commercially manufactured fabrics, clothing, flour, canned fruits and vegetables, or furniture? All these things have been and can be produced in the home. We might conceivably be satisfied with the result if we had to revive the home industries involved in making them. We might thus find better quality and more diversity. We might benefit from a renaissance of the creative impulse and the esthetic disposition, of which a machine age has so nearly robbed us. But Mr. Fort would scarcely press his argument to this, its only logical conclusion.

If one is a sincere prohibitionist, we are afraid that he must believe the making and use of home brew as reprehensible as making and selling alcoholic beverages. There is no reason for suppressing the latter which would not lead him to suppress the former—if he could. The practical situation is merely that here is one great area which must perforce be left to the judgment and the conscience of the individual. No political administration under a representative government will ever make a serious attempt to regulate the practices of the home. In most communities, if a citizen were incarcerated for possessing hard cider from his own apples, there would be a jail delivery.

The whole incident is merely another dramatization of the fact that the forces of reform have undertaken a hopeless task in attempting to enforce by law a standard of personal conduct which does not enlist the moral support of large sections of the community. It is another piece of evidence that our social *mores* are really something deeper and stronger than legislative enactment. The aim of prohibition is admittedly nullified in the home, and it will continue to be nullified there as long as individuals want it so. Nullification in other ways may become more difficult or dangerous if enforcement becomes more efficient, but we see no sign yet of its abatement. The Wets cannot improve their moral position or their status by accepting Mr. Fort's compromise, and it is not likely that they will do so.

The Embattled Humanists

WHILE statesmen in London are discussing the reduction of armament, and while commissions in Geneva are trying to remove the shadow of war, a new threat to domestic and international peace has appeared in our own pacific nation. A series of skirmishes between reactionary and radical literary critics—between the New Humanists on the one side and the Anti-Humanists on the other—now promises to develop into a general engagement. Both forces are preparing for active hostilities, and only a prompt appeal to President Hoover can, it is said, preserve the status quo in the world of letters.

A magazine article is thought to be the cause of this impending conflict. In the winter issue of The Hound and Horn, Mr. Allen Tate attacked the humanists for their ambiguous attitude toward religion. In the January issue of The Bookman, Mr. Robert Shafer replied, partly with logic and partly with invective. "Not hastily or willingly," he accused Mr. Tate of "deliberate misrepresentation," of "puerile inconsequence," of impudence that "could no further go"; and he ended with a flourish by calling him, "A mere talking mole! . . . A fellow so utterly nothing as he knows not what he would be."

Also speaking in behalf of the New Humanists, and in the same issue of The Bookman, Mr. Seward Collins buried the whole of the 1920's, consigning poets and novelists, critics and dramatists, to one vast charnel house, and extending salvation only to the little handful of those who have accepted the gospel of More and Babbitt. The Anti-Humanists are now preparing their separate replies; and it is widely feared that the whole conflict may be transferred from the world of thought into that of action. Will there be duels and literary assassinations? Will university libraries be wrapped in flames along with the embattled Humanists who defend them? Will the press be censored? Will the militia be called out, and will the impending civil war develop into a struggle between the Powers?

At such a moment of crisis, when the energies of all true citizens should be directed toward the preservation of peace, it hardly behooves us to discuss the underlying causes of the conflict. We can only say that the principal dispute is over contemporary literature. Most of the Anti-Humanists defend it; the Humanists attack it as being vicious, feeble and romantic. The Anti-Humanists look hopefully toward the future; the Humanists direct their vision farther and farther into a past where they claim to discern our only refuge. They seem to hold that literary creation, at least for the present, is effectively dead.

However, though all the Humanists agree that it is dead, they differ on the question of when it died. Mr. Collins, for example, confines his obituary to the period since 1900. Professor Babbitt himself rejects practically every writer since Rousseau, but he finds life in Milton. Professor Foerster, his leading disciple, has qualms about Shakespeare, but is willing to accept Dante. Mr. Gorham Munson is more extreme. Adopting a fundamentalist position, he attempts to settle the dispute by rejecting modern and medieval literature as a whole. "Objectively considered," he proclaims in a recent essay, "literature may be found to have been in decline, not just for a century and a half or just for six hundred years, but almost from its classical sources and from the Scriptures of ancient lands." And so the struggle continues—about something that may be found to have begun and ended with Homer, or with the Mahabharata, or even, perhaps, with a few biscuits of baked clay unearthed in the ruins of Babylon.

But although the causes of the conflict are in the past, it is none the less menacing to the peace of the world today. The two opposing forces are being rapidly mobilized. The flaming cross of the Humanists is being carried to those universities where most of their clansmen occupy chairs of History or Literature. The Anti-Humanists, more modern in sympathies, are spreading their mobilization orders by radio and by airplane mail. The first bloody clash is momentarily expected. . . . And meanwhile the novelists, the dramatists, the poets—who wander in the no-man's land of this critical battle, expecting at any moment to be wounded by a ricocheting bullet, or filled with the fragments of a bomb, or annihilated out of pure critical wantonness—the creative artists in general may quote against both sides the description of another breed of Humanists which Sumner gives in his "Folkways":

> They had no trade or profession and could make no recognized career. Their controversies had a large personal element. They sought to exterminate each other. Three excuses have been suggested for them. The excessive petting and spoiling they met with when luck favored them; the lack of a guarantee for their physical circumstances, which depended on the caprice of patrons and the malice of rivals; and the delusive influence of antiquity, or their notions about it.

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HERBERT CROLY, PRESIDENT; DANIEL MEBANE, TREASURER

EDITORS

HERBERT CROLY BRUCE BLIVEN GEORGE SOULE
EDMUND WILSON STARK YOUNG R. M. LOVETT

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

JANE ADDAMS JOHN DEWEY WALDO FRANK
ALVIN JOHNSON E. C. LINDEMAN LEWIS MUMFORD
GILBERT SELDES R. G. TUGWELL LEO WOLMAN

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The Personality of Proust

I HAVE already written in The New Republic (March 20, 1928) of Marcel Proust's novel, "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu." During the last few years, however, there has appeared an immense amount of matter—letters of Proust's and memoirs by friends—which, taken together, gives a fairly complete picture of Proust's personality and life; and it is partly in the light of these documents that I want to write something further about him.

We learn from these memoirs that, as in the case of his hero, Proust's chronic malady, asthma, developed very early, with all the special habits which went with it and which came later to submerge his life; and that Proust himself was aware, from the first, of the neurotic character of his disease. One specialist, to whom the Bibescos had insisted upon his going, told him that his asthma had "become a nervous habit," and that the only way for him to be cured was to go to a sanitarium in Germany, where they would break him of the asthma habit ("because I shall certainly not go," says Proust, to explain his use of the conditional) "as morphine addicts are cured of the morphine habit"; and another doctor (perhaps the same) told Proust that he would prefer not to attempt to cure him, as even if he should be successful, Proust would unquestionably simply develop a different set of symptoms. Proust had come to use his illness as a pretext for escaping the ordinary contacts with the world, for being relieved from the obligations of punctuality and from embarrassing encounters. His supernormal sensitiveness must have made the social life which so fascinated him inordinately difficult for him; and his illness gave him a sort of counter-advantage over people whom, with the deep-rooted snobbery which coexisted with a bold and relentless intelligence, he imagined to possess some advantage over him. His illness enabled him to come late and, by doing so, to attract attention; to attract attention and provoke compassion by sitting at dinner in an overcoat; or not to come at all and, by stimulating people's interest, to make them all the more anxious to entertain him. He had already, apparently, reached the point at an early stage of his career of making Prince Antoine Bibesco and his brother Emmanuel, friends of his own age, come in late at night to tell him what had happened at parties which they had been attending but from which he had stayed away. And when the Bibescos arranged to have him meet their cousin, the Princess Marthe Bibesco, who had written a clever book and whom he had expressed a great desire to know, he appeared at the ball where she was to be present, "livid and bearded" and constantly shivering, "his collar turned up over his white tie" and "his body encased in a pelisse which was too large for him," so that "he had the appearance of having come with his coffin," and sat staring at her, as she danced, "with great sad eyes"—until he had made her so self-conscious and nervous, that, when she came to talk to him, she snubbed him.

When Robert Dreyfus, Fernand Gregh and other friends of Proust's young manhood put on, in 1896, when Proust was twenty-five, an amateur revue in which one of the scenes represented someone protesting to a character made up as Proust over the high price of "Les Plaisirs et les Jours"—Proust's first book, for which, with his passion for smartness, for combining fashion with art, he had succeeded in obtaining a preface by Anatole France, pictures by Madeleine Lemaire and musical settings for some of his poems on painters by Reynaldo Hahn—and the actor who played Proust replying with overelaborate politeness and fantastic self-deprecation, Proust himself was mortally wounded and would not come to any of the performances. And at the time when he was much in love with the young lady—apparently one of the originals of Gilberte—who afterwards married his friend Gaston de Caillavet, and would go out to Neuilly to talk and to bring refreshments to the girls, while the young men were playing tennis, Proust would be troubled with dark suspicions of mockery and malice—not, says Mme. Pouquet, unjustified—when a ball would be suddenly misplaced in the middle of the lunch and conversation. Years later, when Jeanne de Caillavet had married and Proust had long ceased to call on her and her husband, he arrived late in the evening one night, without previous notification, and, pouring forth a thousand apologies, insisting that they should not disturb themselves, asked the butler whether he could see them: when Mme. de Caillavet and her husband appeared, he inquired whether he might see their daughter, who had grown up without his having known her (as the narrator in "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu" asks to meet the daughter of Gilberte): they replied that the young girl had gone to bed, but Proust begged them to make her come down. Mlle. de Caillavet was accordingly summoned and came downstairs in a very bad humor—but when she had met Proust, she found him charming and talked to him for more than an hour.

One has heard much of Proust's exquisite politeness, but as we read his letters, we come gradually to the conviction that those friends of his youth who burlesqued it had been prompted by a not unnatural impulse. The interminable and finespun solicitude with which Proust caresses his friends in his letters all too often only goes to emphasize the

fundamental lack of consideration which allows him to use his asthma as an excuse for holding them at his disposition without making definite appointments with them or for compelling them to wait upon him at inconvenient hours. Such a letter as the following to Mme. Scheikevitch is not merely polite to excess: it exhibits a peculiar kind of morbidly overcultivated and somehow unconvincing sensibility to which it would be hard to find anything similar even in the eighteenth century: "How distressing to learn that you have been ill, what an additional source of distress to learn it only now—not to have been able to be sad when you were suffering, because I knew nothing about it. How was it that I did not know? Probably because I have seen the Princess Soutzo so rarely and with so many people about—it is she who has just told me. It is in a retrospective manner, now that you are well again, that I must return in my imagination and mount your Calvary—sleep through, or rather, not sleep through, your nights of fever. So treacherously malignant is our human fate that, as if it were not painful enough for me to have to grieve about you with my friendship of today, the past of your suffering restores to me for a moment my more lively friendship of a year ago. It is with that friendship that I commiserate with you for all the distress that you have had and it makes me accord a maximum force of compassion at a time when the compassion which would be dictated by the present leaf of the calendar of my friendship would be already sad enough." Later, when Mme. Scheikevitch had lost her money as a result of the Bolshevik revolution, Proust wrote—mentioning at the beginning of his letter that he was "very tired to write to you tonight"—to offer to share with her the proceeds from the sale of a part of his furniture which he was contemplating at the time—though "in my cardiac condition tonight I shan't be able to get up safely for two days." When Mme. Scheikevitch declined this suggestion "with some vivacity," Proust was infinitely grieved and advanced the further and even more impossible proposal that she should support herself by engaging to supply Le Temps with a regular daily article and let Proust write the article for her.

Here we are dealing, however, merely with the superficial aspects of Proust's life; and if we would understand the personality behind them, we must go to the author's work—and perhaps not first to his great novel, but to that early collection of stories and sketches which allows us to see more plainly, because they are less strongly imagined and less skillfully executed, his fantasies and preoccupations. "Les Plaisirs et les Jours," written when Proust was between twenty and twenty-three, contains already all the characteristic motifs of "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu." We discover here, not without surprise and uneasiness, that the disillusionment and the valetudinarianism which we had supposed at least painfully earned by an arduous progress of the soul to maturity, had in reality already been present in a completely developed form in the gifted and well-to-do young man scarcely out of his teens. The hero of the first story, for example, of "Les Plaisirs et les Jours," "La Mort de Baldassare Silvande, Vicomte de Sylvanie," is a sensitive and accomplished nobleman who composes music and plays the violin, who is always accompanied when at home on his estate by two pet peacocks and a pet kid, and who values, with jealous vanity, the friendship and attentions of the Duke of Parma. But though the Vicomte is rich, brilliant, smart and usually successful in love—at thirty-five, he is dying of general paralysis: he will never see thirty-six. And in the knowledge that he is surely dying, Baldassare Silvande is happy for the first time in his life—he loves to lie in bed savoring the last moments of life, foretasting the sad sweetness of last partings. The women whom he has easily possessed have meant comparatively little to the Vicomte, but he is madly in love with and furiously jealous of a little Syracusan princess, who loves another and cares nothing about him. Now that Baldassare is on the point of death, however, the little princess often comes to see him and treats him with tenderness.

But, after a time, to Baldassare's surprise, and to the surprise of the doctors who are attending him, he finds himself taking a turn for the better: he begins to be able to walk again and is evidently on the point of getting well. But, faced with unexpected recovery, Baldassare is brought to realize that he would much prefer to die: he had prepared to take leave of life and no longer cares anything about it—what he really enjoys is a dying condition. And, after a month of steady recovery, he begins to relapse into his invalid state and is soon again unable to walk. He summons the perverse Syracusan princess and begs her, as his dying request, for his sake to stay away from a ball where he knows that she is to lead the cotillion with her lover. "I cannot promise you that," she replies. "It is two months now since I have seen him, and I may never see him again." "Then remember me for a moment," he pleads—"for the little time that, if I were there, you might be obliged to spend with me in order to avoid the appearance of being too much with him." "I hardly dare promise you that," she answers, "the ball will last so short a time. Even if I am with him all the time, I shall hardly have time to see him. I will give you a moment every day thereafter." "That won't be possible, you will forget me, but if, after a year, alas! perhaps longer, something sad you might chance to be reading, a death or a rainy evening, should make you think of me, what a kindness you would be doing me!" Baldassare arranges himself to die. In his last pathetic and exquisite moments, he watches from the window a ship setting sail for India and listens to the chime of a distant village "imperceptible and profound as a heart-beat." He remembers how his mother used to kiss him goodnight, to chafe his bare feet in her hands and to sit

beside him when he could not sleep—and how, when his engagement to be married had been broken, only his mother had been able to console him. And amidst a sorrowing family, he expires—just as the Duke of Parma arrives.

It is easy to recognize in the hero of this preposterous story both the narrator of Proust's novel and Swann—especially as we first see Baldassare, as we do Swann, through the eyes of a small boy, his nephew, who does not thereafter play any role in the story and whose sole function seems to be to swell the grandeur of the *grand seigneur* by showing him in the perspective of a child's imagination. It is, in fact, almost as if the half-romantic Vicomte were a projection of the child's imagination.

In another story, "La Confession d'une Jeune Fille," a young girl—who tells the story herself—has spent the sweetest hours of her life with her mother on a family estate; but at the age of fourteen, an "already very vicious" little cousin had taught her "things which made her thrill at once with voluptuousness and remorse." She had finally torn herself away, feeling a desperate need for her mother, whom she supposed to be still in Paris. Suddenly, however, as she wandered through the grounds, she had found her mother sitting on a bench, smiling and holding out her arms. The young girl had thrown herself upon her and confessed, weeping, all that had happened. But at sixteen, the girl was further corrupted by a "perverse and wicked" young man; and from that time on, "once the habit had been acquired, there was no lack of immoral young men to exploit it." When the girl is twenty, the mother's health is failing—she has developed a weak heart—she wishes to see her daughter married, and "to prove to her mother how much she loves her," the young girl agrees to marry "precisely the young man who was likely to have upon her the happiest influence," and who is willing to live with her family, so that she shall not be separated from her mother. But on the very eve, almost, of the wedding, while the young girl's fiancé is out of town, her family entertain at dinner the man who has first led her astray. At the insistence of a convivial uncle, and against her better inclination, she permits herself to drink three glasses of champagne, whereupon, withdrawing with her former admirer to another room, they lock the door and fall into one another's arms. When they are about to join the company again, the girl looks at herself in the mirror and sees her "shining eyes, her flushed cheeks, her offered mouth—a sensual, stupid and brutal joy," with, beside them, "the mouth of Jacques, avid beneath its mustaches." Then, from the mirror, she becomes aware that her mother is standing behind them looking at them from the balcony outside the window. The mother falls backwards and is killed—the young girl, at the beginning of her confession, has declared her intention of committing suicide.

The first thing we recognize in this story is the curious incident at the beginning of "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu," in which Mlle. Vinteuil is made to derive a sadistic satisfaction from allowing her Lesbian companion to spit on her father's picture. To what extent this improbable scene was the creation of Proust's imagination we learn from Mme. de Gramont, who, in her book of memoirs of Montesquiou and Proust, prints a letter in which Proust explains to her that the situation had been based on a real incident. Mme. de Gramont says that she herself had heard the anecdote, and that, as a matter of fact, it was perfectly harmless: it had been Proust who had not merely lent it a sinister significance which it did not possess, but had actually so distorted it in his memory, along the lines of his peculiar obsessions, as to transform it into quite a different story. But we recognize further that the incident of Mlle. Vinteuil and its prototype, "La Confession d'une Jeune Fille," contain in embryo the whole organism of the long novel. Not that the behavior itself of the narrator of "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu" corresponds explicitly with the behavior of these two wayward young women; but in the large design of the novel, the pattern is repeated. In order to find it, however, we must first consider how "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu" is constructed and by what methods its meanings are conveyed.

The real elements, of course, of any work of fiction, are the elements of the author's personality: his imagination embodies in the images of characters, situations and scenes the fundamental conflicts of his nature or the cycle of phases through which it habitually passes. His personages are personifications of the author's various impulses and emotions: and the relations between them in his stories are really the relations between these. One of the causes, in fact, of our feeling that certain works are more satisfactory than others is to be found in the superior thoroughness and candor with which the author has represented these relations. We feel his world to be real and complete, not merely in proportion to the variety of elements it includes, but also in proportion as we recognize these elements as bearing to each other the intimate organic relation of the elements of a human personality. From this point of view, Dostoievsky is one of the most satisfactory of novelists; Myshkin and Rogozhin thrill us because they are the opposite poles of one nature; the three brothers Karamazov move us because they are the spirit, mind and body of one man. And if we ask ourselves why even so great a novelist as Dickens does not make upon us so profound an impression as Dostoievsky, we realize that it is because in the case of Dickens, wide and varied as the world of his novels is, the novelist himself is not sufficiently conscious of the significance of what happens there, so that, except in the very best of them, he has admitted a larger conventional element than the greatest novelists ordinarily allow and has been content to press into service "good" characters and villains who are pure

types from melodrama and into whom the author has scarcely projected himself at all. Now, if Dickens falls short of Dostoievsky in this respect, Proust has passed a good deal beyond him—has, in fact, employed his characters as symbols with so little concern for a framework to support them—though, in this, he is merely doing with the elements of the novel what the symbolistic poet had done with the metaphors of poetry—as perhaps to fall over into decadence. In Dostoievsky, as in Dickens, though the characters are as much the embodiment of the novelist's impulses and emotions as the images of a dream, there is always the structure of the story to account for and carry them. But there is hardly any such structure in Proust. There is a story, the story of the narrator, of his illusions and disillusions in connection with the world of snobbery and of his attachments for Gilberte and Albertine—but some of the most important characters in the book have almost no relation to the hero at all—at least no relation which the story accounts for: Swann is merely a friend of the family whom the narrator has occasionally seen in his youth, Charlus a person he sometimes meets later on. Yet these two characters almost dominate, respectively, the earlier and later parts of the book—and as we read, we never question their significance: it is only when we think to examine Proust's novel from the point of view of ordinary fiction that we become aware of their irrelevance to the main narrative. Then we perceive that "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu," which begins in the darkened room of sleep, stands alone as a true dream-novel among works of social observation.

For "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu" has its harmony, its development—it has its story, although this story is something more than the explicit history of the narrator. In retelling the sketches from "Les Plaisirs et les Jours," which must inevitably sound rather absurd, I have, however, perhaps made them seem more naïve than, as Proust writes them, they actually are. Proust himself is by no means unaware of the neurotic psychology of his characters—in fact, this, in spite of his clothing their history in much lyrical elegiac prose of the *fin de siècle* sensibility, is one of the chief sources of his interest in them. We ask ourselves in surprise, when we have read one of them, whether Proust, for all his apparent deliquescent romanticism, has not intended, after all, to present us with a realistic case history. And so the more we meditate on his novel, the more clearly we become aware that the shifting proportions and juxtapositions of its elements, the order in which they are introduced, tell a fuller and somewhat different story from the rather meager and uneventful one of the narrator, whose own innocuous enough case is so soon extinguished in a sanitarium (to which, one remembers, Proust himself would not go). We recognize, on a prodigious scale, the pattern of the Vinteuil episode in "Swann" and of the "Confession d'une Jeune Fille."

The role of Mlle. Vinteuil's father in the first of these, of the young girl's mother in the second, is played in the novel to some extent by the mother of the hero, but chiefly by the hero's grandmother. We know what place Proust's own mother had held in his life: he had lived with her up to her death, when Proust was thirty-four, in the same room he had had as a child. "The death of his mother," says Mme. Pouquet, "was for Marcel the greatest grief of his life, a veritable rending asunder. He had always remained for her a little child. She surrounded him with every attention, every vigilance. She knew how to look after him without ever imposing herself on him or importuning him. She cushioned his life. She accepted all Marcel's caprices as perfectly natural things." And we know from the "Sentiments Filiaux d'un Parricide," in the miscellany "Pastiches et Mélanges," that he bitterly and morbidly blamed himself for having saddened and perhaps shortened her life. Now the hero of the novel is represented as causing his grandmother and mother much anxiety and as reproaching himself extravagantly for doing so, but he is not made to sin against them—their simplicity, piety, rigor, their too protective affection—in the same perverse way in which the *jeune fille* and Mlle. Vinteuil do. Yet the impression we get is the same. About the middle of "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu," in a series of touching, wonderfully written, but infinitely cruel scenes, the hero's grandmother is made to expire; and immediately afterwards, the figure of Charlus begins to swell to enormous proportions: to the salute of a sulphurous overture, the most formidable set-piece in the book, the demon of homosexuality is summoned.

This subject does take on, in Proust, a truly demoniacal character: Proust does not try to sell us homosexuality as desirable and morally respectable, as André Gide, for example, does. The tone of the overture to "Sodome et Gomorrhe," which so sepulchrally lays on and rubs in the horrid lot of the homosexuals, is gruesome rather than tragic; and as we read on, we become aware of something special, and rather suspect, about Proust's attitude toward this subject. In spite of all the dark suggestions circulated as to the ambiguous character of Albertine's sex, it seems to me evident that both Proust's hero and himself were primarily preoccupied with women: we are made strongly to feel the feminine attraction of both Albertine and Odette, and the spell of their lovers' infatuation, whereas none of the male homosexual characters is ever made to appear in any other light than the horrible or the comic. Proust had apparently, in his youth, been in love at different times with several women—Mme. de Caillavet (Mme. Pouquet) was evidently one of these—had fared rather badly with them and had never forgiven them to the end of his days. He shows, in "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu," more resentment against the opposite sex than enthusiasm for his own. Homosexuality figures in Proust almost exclusively

under the aspect of perversity, and it is in general unmistakably associated, as in the incident of Mlle. Vinteuil, with another kind of perversity, sadism. The cruel and nasty side of Proust is the inevitable reaction against, the inevitable compensation for, the good-little-boy side, which—see the letters quoted above to Mme. Scheikevitch—was a great deal too good to be human—or, more precisely, which remained rather puerile. Proust himself has given us the key to the situation in his comment on Mlle. Vinteuil: "It was not that she derived pleasure from the idea of doing evil, that evil seemed agreeable to her. It was that pleasure seemed to her wicked. And since, whenever she gave herself up to it, it was accompanied for her by evil thoughts which were otherwise foreign to her virtuous nature, she ended by finding in pleasure something diabolical, by identifying it with Evil."

The grandmother, in the novel, dies in agony; and the demon Charlus pops up. The narrator, still in his mother's house, tortures himself over his inability to hold Albertine, whom he has brought there in his mother's absence, at the same time that he is never able to make up his mind whether he has ever really wanted her. When Albertine leaves him, the emotional life of the book becomes progressively asphyxiated by the infernal fumes which Charlus has raised with him—until such a large percentage of the characters have tragically, gruesomely, irrevocably, turned out to be homosexual that we begin for the first time to find the story a little incredible. Charlus is obviously a projection of the later Proust, an extension of the history of the narrator, as Swann was of the earlier, and as Baldassare Silvande seemed to be of the young nephew who magnified him. We assist at Charlus's moral debacle and we leave him finally in a state of semi-idiocy. And the ultimate degradation of Charlus is followed immediately, with an effect of recovery and contrast, by the narrator's heroic resolve to retrieve the waste of his self-indulgent existence by shutting himself away from the world and giving up the rest of his life to the composition of his novel—a retirement by which, as he strangely explains, he will also punish himself for the solitude, anxiety and illness which his grandmother had endured without sympathy.

The elements here of Proust's dependence on his mother; his unsatisfactory relations with women (he was never able to find any other woman to care for him as his mother did—several of his friends have testified that it was impossible for any friend or inamorata to meet his all-absorbing demands for sympathy and attention—it may perhaps be said that he did not really want to find one); and his impulses toward a sterile and infantile perversity, would, no doubt be explained in a variety of different ways by the different schools of contemporary psychology: Proust is obviously a perfect case for psychoanalysts. But, though we may leave the precise explanation of the relation of these elements to the professional psychologists, who perhaps cannot tell us much more about it than Proust has done himself, it is important to indicate that some relation exists, for it was evidently one of Proust's objects in writing his book to trace and dramatize this relation. Much that seems ambiguous or distorted in the novel is, I believe, due to an uncertainty on Proust's part as to whether he is exemplifying in his characters and situations universal principles of human conduct or merely projecting in sometimes monstrous images the elements of a psychological case which he knew to be morbid and special.

And if Proust's novel reflects his life in a way even beyond the obvious one in which the autobiography of the narrator corresponds to the history of the author, so his life became involved with his book even more than the lives of most great writers. From the time of his mother's death, Proust, as I have said, withdrew from that world which he had always known in so remote, though so intense and intent, a way, and gave himself up to the labor of writing his novel. He had, between 1906 and 1912, written the whole thing (with the exception of the part about the War) before the first volume was brought out in 1913. And thereafter, though his illness grew worse, though he seemed on the point of lapsing at last into the death which, since his early twenties when he had written "La Mort de Baldassare Silvande," he had indulged himself continually in anticipating, he survived long enough to revise and supervise the publication of almost the whole. But he did not quite see it through. The last sections which he sent to the press were the volumes called "La Prisonnière"—the climax of the narrator's story, his struggle and failure with Albertine. After that, in the novel itself, there is nothing but demoralization and decay, until the end, when the narrator makes a stand, in the only way which now seems possible, against the universal disintegration: by setting himself to reintegrate it into a work of literature—the point, therefore, at which Proust himself had sixteen years earlier begun. He did not live to finish correcting the proofs of "La Prisonnière"—who will wonder that so neurotic a man was unable to remain alive to put in order the final chapters of so dispiriting a story? Early in the October of 1922, he caught a chill and ran up a high fever, but refused stubbornly to see a doctor. He worked at his novel harder than ever, as if he had been racing with that death which at the same time he was frankly inviting. As his fever grew continually worse, he ceased to take any nourishment except a little iced beer which he had brought in, in a pail, from the Ritz. When his brother, a doctor, came to see him, Proust, fearing to be dislodged from his apartment, threatened to jump out of the window if he were not let alone, but promised to allow medical treatment as soon as he had finished his work. The day of his death, the eighteenth of November, he called his maid at three in the morning and dictated to her some supplementary notes on the death of the novelist, Ber-

gotte—remarking, when he had finished, that he thought what he had just composed was good. It is at the death of Bergotte that Proust's narrator, in what is perhaps the most exalted passage of the book, asserts the reality of those obligations, culminating in the obligation of the writer to do his work as it ought to be done, which seem to be derived from some other world, so little sanction can we recognize them as having in the jumbled and desperate world of humanity. But the effort of dictating resulted in the bursting of an abscess in Proust's lung, and the next day he was dead.

In spite of all the less reassuring or less agreeable aspects of Proust which appear more plainly in these letters and memoirs than in "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu"—his self-indulgence, his chronic complaining, his perversity, his valetudinarianism, his overcultivated sensibility—we get the impression from them, as we do in his novel, of an intellect and imagination vigorous, comprehensive and deep—one of the things which strikes us most is his capacity for keeping in intimate touch with various circles of friends, as with various fields of activity, sympathizing with the emotions, understanding the interests, and following the affairs of each, though of the several groups already represented by the memoirs which have so far been published, all seem pretty well independent of each other and some scarcely at any point to overlap; and, in spite of all his parade of weakness, in spite of all his masks and indirections, of a character of singular magnanimity, integrity and strength—on one occasion he fought a duel with a man who had written what he considered an insulting review of "Les Plaisirs et les Jours." "There were in Marcel Proust," says Lucien Daudet, "all the elements of a spoiled child: he never actually became one, because his genius had the corrective effect of dissociating these elements—his genius, his personal dignity and also his sense of humor."

I have suggested that the form of Proust's book perhaps represents a decadence of the novel of social observation; and when the enchantment of reading it has worn off, we begin to wonder whether the prime source of this decadence may not lie in the society with which he is dealing. There are indications that Proust felt this himself—the bombing of Paris during the air-raids in the last volumes, when Charlus is seen in the last stages of his decline, seems to be represented as something in the nature of a Biblical judgment upon a society which had earned the fate of being menaced, if not destroyed, and, in reading Proust, we are continually feeling that we are being told about the end of something. It may be that Proust is the last great historian of the Heartbreak House of the educated classes of the civilization of the nineteenth century, their society, their intelligence, their diplomacy, their literature and their art—a writer more powerfully effective than even Thackeray or Chekhov or Edith Wharton because he has become more desperate. Proust had never had to earn a living; he had never had to deal with men on equal terms; he had never been pressed into a situation which made him feel the necessity of relating his art and ideas to the problems of society in general. Penetrating as his sympathies were, magnificent as was his imagination, he could protect himself against all contacts which disturbed him by retreating to his darkened cork-lined room. Some of the "principles" of which Proust is always talking and by which he produces some of the most moving of his effects turn out, when we come to think about them, to be assumptions which do not universally hold—the assumption, for example, that everybody has enough money to be neurotic in peace and comfort. Yet in that limited world in which he lives, the world of the dispossessed nobility and the fashionable and cultivated bourgeoisie, with their artists and their doctors, their servants and their parasites, he does succeed in disengaging truths which operate far beyond that world and which relate it to the rest of humanity. The processes of social change which he shows us are exemplified by the whole of human history; and, through its theory of the impossibility of ideal romantic love, "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu" subsumes "The Great Gatsby," "The Sun Also Rises," "The Bridge of San Luis Rey," and how many contemporary European novels. Proust's treatment of this theme, which is always wavering between the tragic and the slightly maudlin, announces, perhaps by this very falling into absurdity, the breaking up of an ideal and its analysis and ultimate readjustment from a point of view toward which Proust's own researches have been among the first to indicate the way.

At any rate, the little man with the great eyes, the Saracen's beak and the ill-fitting dress-shirt, still dominates his and our own special contemporary world: he has supplied symbols in terms of which we see it and in the light of which we may better understand it. Let us not wonder, and let us not complain, if he suffered from its most insidious diseases.

EDMUND WILSON.

Cartoon

This woman mask that wears her to the bone
They say for certain is her soul's disguise:
Such holes are cut in colored cloth for eyes
Where the live lid winks beneath the painted one:
The eyes are hers the mouth is not her own:
The mouth smiles soft remembers well is wise
Speaks answers laughs loves kisses: these are lies
When at the lids her serious look is shown

Whether her soul in fear has made this mask
For easier wandering beneath our moon
Or whether time has matched her such a one
By turn of luck they neither know nor ask

And yet it's sure that when she comes to die
This is the mask sure death will know her by.

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH.

The Future in Spain

PRIMO DE RIVERA has resigned as Spanish dictator—and has been succeeded, at least for the present, by General Amaso Berenguer. It remains to be seen, of course, whether General de Rivera is as completely out of power as the newspaper correspondents suggest, and also whether, as is promised, General Berenguer's regime will be but one step, and a brief one, on the road back to constitutional government. In any case, the moment seems opportune for a review of the more fundamental factors in the Spanish situation, which must be kept in mind in order to understand the current developments.

Several times before he relinquished his office, de Rivera had announced that the time was not ripe to relinquish his task and allow the country to come back to a normal form of government. His attitude was partly, no doubt, the result of natural human reluctance to give up power; but, in part, it was also due to some very curious happenings of recent months. First of all, when it was desired to make the existing "National Assembly" more representative by giving certain corporate bodies, such as universities, lawyers' associations and labor unions, the right to appoint representatives, some of those bodies, notably the labor ones, refused to nominate anyone, while the University of Valladolid and the Madrid lawyers enthusiastically nominated the chief exiled opponents of the dictator, including the greatest of all his enemies, Miguel de Unamuno.

Then a military court-martial acquitted Sanchez Guerra, the former Conservative leader, of conspiracy, although everybody knew perfectly well, and he himself openly avowed, that he had come to Spain to bring about Primo's downfall. It is clear, therefore, that not only the intelligent minority but even the army itself were far from favorable to de Rivera's regime. In any other country but Spain, a military dictatorship which could not rely on a military court-martial's bringing in a verdict of guilty against its chief enemy would be an anomaly: in Spain it is understandable, for orthodox political behavior is unthinkable there. Only when the idea of government is regarded seriously will a people trouble to be consistent in their practice, and the Spaniard has learned to be contemptuous of all government. Consequently the truth about Spanish politics reads more like a Dostoievsky novel than an orthodox work in political science.

To understand what is happening in Spain, one must first learn certain facts of recent history which are usually buried in silence, and first of all one must glance at the position of the royal dynasty. King Alfonso is an old-fashioned king in more ways than one, an autocrat, a man of the world, with nothing democratic or limited about his monarchy. His reign and the years of his life are coterminous, and both stretch back into the days when autocratic kings were common in Europe. To the Spanish mind this sovereign has always been a sort of fourth person of the Trinity. What natural loyalty exists towards government is really a subservience to the dogma of the divine right of kings. Now everybody knows that there hangs over the Spanish dynasty a sort of Sophoclean doom; however often it is denied, there is a constant doubt whether a successor sound in body and mind can exist to take the throne when its present occupant dies. A hereditary disease, hæmophilia, which mysteriously attacks only males but is transmitted only by females, is bringing sorrow and pain to the whole royal family. This disease is marked by a tendency to uncontrollable hemorrhage; the blood may flow copiously, perhaps fatally, from a slight wound, or sometimes even spontaneously. If the dynasty is in doubt, what may not happen in Spain?

A second factor in the situation is the cause which brought de Rivera to power; and again we have something which is universally whispered but universally denied. The dictatorship came into being at the request of the King as the only means of saving his face. In 1923 things had gone so far that it was evident that the existence of any sort of parliament where free speech existed must sooner or later bring to light discreditable facts about the royal responsibility for huge military disasters in Morocco. It is known that the King, overriding Cortes and army council alike, telegraphed to the unfortunate General Sylvester to make an immediate advance at all costs: the result was the disaster of Anual and the suicide of the General.

Alfonso's object had been to stem the rising tide of disaffection in Catalonia and elsewhere by a spectacular military success: failure brought about the very thing which he was struggling to prevent. The anti-royalist parties in the Cortes got wind of his telegram and pressed for the settling of the question of *responsibilidades* in Morocco; it seemed that the evidence must come into daylight, with the probable effect of a republican coup; and the King, with his usual courage, gambled on a military coup which should muzzle the Cortes and save the situation. Eventually Primo de Rivera proved to be the man and the members of the former government went into seclusion or exile. There was no popular enthusiasm for the change: it was merely a court revolution. These two facts of semi-secret history must always be remembered by all who try to understand the curious situation in Spain. To them must be added the relinquishing of any idea that

the Spanish dictatorship was analagous to that of Italy. Primo de Rivera has neither the bad nor the good points of Mussolini. Under his rule there was probably less violence than under previous Spanish governments.

Again, the attitude of Spain to its dictator has been precisely the opposite of that of Italy to hers. It has been very hard to find anyone enthusiastic about him, and most people were openly hostile. During two months' stay last year in a Madrid pension, the daily meal-time conversation of a roomful of people was almost entirely contemptuous, and in the provinces it was hard to discover more than an occasional supporter. One could trace even in the hearty republican an undertone to the criticism which explains a good deal: one felt that Primo had not sufficient of that divinity which doth hedge a king to gain him a Spaniard's respect; and the King, by limiting his absolutism under the directorate, has lost much of the respect which, as I have said, was rooted in the same emotion.

And yet I would be prepared to argue that Primo de Rivera has given to Spain the best government it has had since Charles III. This, of course, is saying very little: he could not have given them a worse government than many during the last hundred and fifty years. To begin with, however, he temporarily stopped the fiasco in Morocco. His detractors can say with truth that the Riffs, by waking the French watchdog, played into his hands, and that pesetas are as useful in keeping them quiet as any military prowess. We may grant that Primo has had luck in Morocco, but it is arguable whether luck has not been the tool of most successful statesmen, and anyway Spain is not pouring out blood and gold as she was ten years ago.

The second great Spanish problem is the Catalan question. Here it would seem that the great Catalan industrialists have sold their separatist nationalism in order to keep their mess of tariffs. Whatever Catalan malcontents may say, the fiscal policy of the government has favored them at the great expense of other parts, notably Valencia, whose fruit export trade is jeopardized by the absurd situation arising out of the Chinese Wall of tariffs built round Spain. Critics of Primo have said that all sorts of underground revolts are in existence and that the Catalan question is as far as ever from being settled, but at least appearances suggest that things are quieter in Barcelona than ever before: nay, an utterly impartial observer might say that Primo had enriched the "soul of Catalunya" by canalizing all the restive genius of that people away from politics into cultural pursuits: books, pictures, music, these at least are thriving more than ever before among the Catalans, for all the insults and injuries they have suffered.

More fundamental than either of these problems, important as they are, is the problem of how to get Spain, the last great medieval country, to consent to be modernized. Here the dictatorship has put up quite an imposing façade of achievement. There have been plans of all sorts for stimulating production, for developing the use of raw materials, for road-making and railway construction, while the exhibitions in Seville and Barcelona have been good advertisements in their way. "Tourism" may well become a more important industry than heretofore. Doubtless, a number of the officials are feathering their own nests and, doubtless, there is scarcely any other country with claims to civilization where schemes for irrigation, railways, roads, industry in general, would take as long to mature as in Spain; but when all is said, Primo de Rivera can claim that at least he has tried to do these things and that the attempts have been a valuable piece of national education.

Readers who have no patience, save with democratic forms of government, will ask me what I have to say of the ruthless suppression of all sorts of political freedom under de Rivera. It is absolutely true that the dictatorship suppressed all freedom of speech, opinion or writing and that some of the means adopted have been almost franker than it is possible to believe. Thus, literary debating societies, such as the Madrid Athenæum, have been forbidden to discuss politics and, on their proving fractious, have had their committees put in prison and new committees nominated by the government. The new penal code invents novel crimes to do with expression of opinion in newspapers and virtually muzzles all criticism. There does not exist a single elective governing body, either national or local, in Spain today; all nominations have been made by the central despotism, working very often through its Union Patriotica, a wretched attempt at a Fascist party, which in most parts of Spain is boycotted by all the more respectable sections of the community. Against this, the impartial observer can only place the solitary fact, that before 1923, the semblance of democratic institutions existed, but the reality was often almost as non-existent as now.

The truth is that Spain is, and always has been, a theocracy. The form of government, so-called liberal or conservative in the old days, military dictatorship recently, is of little importance in the face of the unchanging attitude towards society which persists through them all. Spain regards herself as the only surviving fragment of the theocratic world-state of the middle ages; indeed, the middle ages are regarded as a golden age to be looked back upon with regret. If it were possible, the average Spaniard would like a wall about his boundaries too high for any foreign idea to cross. Some time ago, a woman member of the National Assembly appealed to the dictator to prevent the contaminating of the motherland by "pernicious foreign ideas"; she meant bolshevism and birth control, including in the former the mildest types of economic reform. It will surprise those Americans who work for the repeal of the Comstock laws to hear that birth-control is called in Spain "the pernicious *American* propaganda of neo-malthusianism"! Her speech

was a clue to the situation; it also explains Primo de Rivera's enthusiasm for women's suffrage: nine out of ten Spanish women would vote as their confessors directed, especially since more than half of them are illiterate.

The ruling power in Spain is, undoubtedly, the Catholic Church, and its attitude towards political and social problems can be assessed from the little fact that recently the Spanish Church has declared that no good Catholic may be a Rotarian or a member of a women's club. There is no real reaction against this spirit as yet in Spain. Indeed, it is to be noted that nearly all the attempts against the dictatorship have come from the supporters of the *ancien régime:* one is almost persuaded to approve Primo de Rivera simply because so much of the criticism against him is obviously inspired by even more obscurantist political creeds than his own. The frame of mind bred by a theocracy is still predominant even among the rebels.

It would probably have been to the ultimate advantage of the Spanish people if Primo de Rivera had remained in power. His real successor is likely to be either the mouthpiece of a new military clique or a survivor from the unsatisfactory political groups which preceded him. He should have fallen, not at the hands of the parties of yesterday, but at the hands of the parties of tomorrow.

What are these parties? That they will be republican seems more than probable. There will be no alternative; but the thing which is of greatest interest is whether the Spanish republic of tomorrow will be centralized or federalized. More than four hundred years ago, Ferdinand and Isabella began the experiment of turning the Spains into one Spain; the experiment has never succeeded yet. For a time things went fairly well, until Spain imitated France and tried to crush out local feelings, local customs, local privileges. Centralization failed bitterly, and the impoverishing of local patriotism did not produce love of Spain. The Spaniard is medieval in that his country is his city; his best qualities are his civic virtues, and he has never bowed down to the fetish of a national state. It is possible that a federal republic may gradually grow out of the delayed chaos which must come. On the other hand, there are those who believe that modern economic necessities demand a larger unit and that better communications will widen the horizons and make each local patriot see beyond his native hills. There is no knowing; these things are in the future, but it seems likely that autocratic monarchy and veiled theocracy are both doomed by economic evolution. Meanwhile, political forms are not of the first importance in Spain, and if I were a Spaniard I should not bother much about them, but should try to free the intellect from the medieval shackles still cheerfully borne even by the more rebellious minds.

JOHN LANGDON-DAVIES

Chicago's Financial Muddle

TO THE world at large, the present financial situation in Chicago seems to be thoroughly in line with the disorganization which nearly everyone associates with that city. Certainly on the surface, government seems to have broken down. The various administrative units in the city have anticipated two years of tax collections by temporary borrowing from the banks, for which they have given tax warrants as security. These anticipated tax warrants, as issued by the city government proper, the school board, the county, the park boards and the sanitary district, to name only the most important of Cook County's 415 decentralized and financially autonomous bodies, now total approximately $200,000,000. In addition, the city has dipped into and has exhausted most of its special funds, and has run up millions of unpaid bills. The banks have reached the point where they cannot tie up any more of their funds in temporary loans to the city. Creditors are demanding that they be paid. Interest charges on the temporary loans now amount to approximately $12,000,000 annually and, in a balanced budget, expenditures for normal purposes would have to be correspondingly curtailed. Pay-rolls are not being met, and threats are being made that some services will be shut down and that in others employees will be continued only if paid in script. Thus, the general position is one which at first sight seems more to resemble Central America in 1910 than the United States in 1930.

It is easy, in such circumstances, to hunt for a villain, and there is an inclination on the part of many to cast Mayor Thompson for this role—as well as for his accustomed part of buffoon—and to attribute the breakdown to a riot of expenditures which he has either abetted or permitted. Certainly his administration must bear some responsibility. Many useless offices are filled with his henchmen, pay-rolls are padded, while the streets and public works are poorly and wastefully managed. Under the regime of Mr. H. Wallace Caldwell, his appointee to the chairmanship of the Board of Education, the amount spent for janitors in the schools has risen in two years by more than 50 percent, while the expenditures for instruction have been increased by only 9 percent. These janitors are in the main political heelers, whose position has been still further strengthened by their organization as a local of the janitors' union and by affiliation with

the Chicago Federation of Labor. Mayor Thompson and his advisers have, moreover, seen for months the bankruptcy of the city approaching, and have made absolutely no effort to avert or to deal with it. When the budget for 1930 was adopted by the city council, his group tried to prevent all the political sinecures from being abolished. The mayor then attempted, under cover of vetoing the cuts which were made in the police and fire departments and posing as the protector of the liberties of the city, to save the jobs of some of his supporters. He was partially clubbed into line by the council and forced to accept their revised budget, which, unfortunately, was still somewhat inflated. However, his supporter, Mr. Caldwell, is still refusing financial assistance from Mr. Silas Strawn's committee, which has offered to help pay the teachers, because he fears that this assistance would be conditioned by a demand on the part of Mr. Strawn that he dismiss a large percentage of the politicians now disguised as janitors.

But the major source of the deadlock lies far deeper than even Mayor Thompson's capacity for ineptitude and maladministration. It has its roots in the thoroughly corrupt and vicious way in which real property has hitherto been assessed in the city, and in the stubborn attempt of the politicians to resist the pressure for reform which has been brought against them. During this struggle over the revaluation, taxes have not been levied for two years. It is primarily this which has caused the temporary bankruptcy of the city, and which lies behind the externalities of the present debacle. This struggle for revaluation is, therefore, ultimately more important to the city than the temporary financial difficulties in which it is involved. To the story of the revaluation, then, we now turn.

Prior to 1928, the Board of Assessors and the Board of Review, the two popularly elected bodies who assess the property, followed no method at all in making assessments, except in the Loop, or business district. Gross inequalities in valuation developed, not merely because of inaccuracies in estimation, but to a far greater extent from political corruption. In the days before the dominance of the present regime, reductions in taxes were granted to those who were represented by the "proper" attorneys. Graft existed, but it was "respectable" and limited. During the last twelve years, the privilege of engineering the tax reductions has been farmed out to the precinct captains. They have in part been appealed to by taxpayers in their precincts and in part have actively drummed up business. In either case, they would agree to have the valuation of a man's property—and consequently his taxes—reduced in return for the payment of from 35 to 50 percent of the reduction effected. Part of this graft was kept by the precinct captains and the remainder was passed on to higher organizations. Nor were the precinct captains alone in selling these privileges. Politicians and "tax-fixers" used their influence directly with the Board of Assessors and the Board of Review, and members of these boards in turn made their offices extremely lucrative. All of the major factions of the Republican party have been almost equally guilty, and the Democratic assessors and politicians have been as bad as their nominal opponents. So widespread was the tax-fixing that the amount of graft which was thus collected by the various political factions has been estimated by competent observers at from $20,000,000 to $30,000,000 a year.

With special privileges given to so many, those citizens who were honest and who did not seek tax reductions were saddled with the burden of the exemptions which were granted to the others. Gross inequality resulted. The Board of Assessors and the Board of Review, however, were able to keep those who were overtaxed in ignorance by neglecting for thirty years to obey the law which required the publication of the valuations, although it is rumored that on one occasion the valuation of the properties was published in the foreign-language newspapers with only the names and the legal descriptions given. For all practical purposes, therefore, no one knew what his valuation was as compared with his neighbor's.

Professor Herbert D. Simpson of the Institute of Research in Land Economics and Public Utilities, after a study of 5,400 properties which had been sold during a year, found that the assessments ranged from a fraction of one percent to over 100 percent of the actual sales price. In a year when property was assessed on the average at 35 percent of its sales value, 10 percent of the property values were assessed at less than 10 percent of their sales value and 23 percent at less than 20 percent. On the other hand, 4 percent of the property values were assessed at over 80 percent of their real value, 10 percent at over 60 percent and 25 percent at over 45 percent. Professor Simpson concluded that there was on the average a deviation of approximately 40 percent from the level of uniformity. The work of the Board of Review, which passed on individual appeals, was shown to be thoroughly ineffective, since it granted equal reductions to those whose properties were already undervalued and to those whose properties were overassessed.

In 1926 and 1927, latent disgust at the methods of assessment began to break out. The real-estate men of the city, led by George O. Fairweather, together with Margaret Haley, the militant leader of the Teachers' Federation, demanded that the situation be cleaned up. Upon Miss Haley's demand that the valuations be made public, the chairman of the State Tax Commission, William H. Malone, ordered that the taxpayers be mailed the valuations of all properties in their respective neighborhoods. This necessarily revealed the inequalities, and a storm of protest broke out from those who were overtaxed. In May, 1928, the State Tax Commission followed up its good work by ordering a reassessment of all real estate in Cook County, and

it later laid down the specific standards by which property was to be appraised. The politicians fought the reassessment order with every resource at their command. Mr. Malone, however, stood firm, and at his instance—and interestingly enough with the support of Governor Small—a special session of the legislature strengthened his legal powers. After a considerable delay, the Board of Assessors finally agreed to go ahead with the reassessment in October, and engaged a competent expert in the person of Mr. Harry S. Cutmore to carry it through. Over a million pieces of real estate were reappraised in the following months, and the job was largely finished by the following August.

The Board of Review has, however, been delaying the actual reassessment by dilatory tactics in hearing appeals, and it is charged that many of these appeals have in fact been stimulated by the politicians as a means of postponing or preventing the reassessment. The politicians undoubtedly hope to wear down the patience of the people by delay and to induce them to give up reassessment as a price for getting the tax bills sent out on the old basis of assessment and the revenues collected. Mayor Thompson, never content unless there is some George whom he can assail, is now attacking Mr. Fairweather, the chairman of the citizens' group, as the man who has deprived the city of funds by his demands for a reassessment. He is also making an effort to align the small home-owners on his side by declaring that the valuation of Loop properties has been reduced $300,000,000 and the burden thrown on the householders. The truth of the matter is that the Loop, because of the partial use of a definite method of valuation, was previously assessed much more heavily on the average than other sections of the city. But while the Loop will, in general, be given some relief under an honest reassessment, the taxes of most of the small home-owners will also be lightened, for they will no longer bear the burden of paying the taxes which those who have obtained special privilege have hitherto avoided. The honest property-holders, both large and small, will, therefore, benefit when those who have previously escaped their obligations are compelled to assume them.

Whether the politicians can, with the aid of the Board of Review, further delay the reassessment is still uncertain. If the citizens of Chicago are alert, they will not be able to postpone matters much longer. When the reassessment goes into effect and the taxes begin to come in, the worst of the present financial impasse will be cleared up, and with the aid of some enabling legislation, the city will be almost completely back upon its feet in two or three years. The present difficulties will then prove to have been a cheap price to have paid for an honest and uniform system of assessments. Incidentally, the cutting off of the major sources of political funds will greatly weaken the political machines and will make further reforms in the city more possible.

PAUL H. DOUGLAS.

Washington Notes

THE most interesting political problems of the day are those presented by the wider and wider gap between the Eastern and the Western Republicans, and by the Senate alliance between the so-called Progressive Republicans from the agricultural states and the Democrats. At the present session of Congress, this coalition has been more compact and effective than ever before. It has seized control of the Senate, rewritten an entire tariff bill framed by the industrial representatives of the East, and made an almost tragic joke out of the once powerful Old Guard Republican management. The indications are that the coalition will hold through the rest of this session and will increase in strength and effectiveness during the next—it being reasonably sure that the Progressive Republicans, as a result of the November elections, will hold every seat they now have, while the Democrats will probably gain from two to five of those lost in the 1928 Hoover tide. Thus, the Republican majority in the Senate will be reduced and the coalition control rendered easier. Hardly anyone expects the Republican control of the House to be lost, although there, too, of course, the swing back of the pendulum in the off year means a considerable reduction from the present Republican majority of 105. Otherwise the situation in Congress will not, I think, be materially changed by the election results. The real question is what, if anything, in the way of a new political alignment does the coalition forecast—not so much in the campaign this year as in the national campaign of 1932, which is by no means too far away to consider seriously. No national campaign ever is. The political mind bred in the Washington atmosphere is so constituted that the day following the election of a President it begins to speculate about the nominees of the next national conventions.

So far as the future is concerned there are two views of the Senate coalition. One is that it will be carried into the campaign this year, continued in the Senate and extended to the House next year, and go into the 1932 fight an effectively functioning, well driven organization, solidified through congressional achievement and welded together by common ideas and purposes. The logic of this is not a third party, of course, but an amalgamation of Democrats and Progressives into a handsome new party for the next national contest. Undoubtedly this idea is cherished by some of the leading spirits in the Senate coalition. They talk of it among themselves and believe the time is ripe now for the start of the amalgamation movement—that it can be accomplished in a concrete and formidable way in 1932. It should be said that the gentlemen most engaged in promoting the amalgamation idea are Progressives, not Democrats—the reason for this being that the necessary preliminary to the formation of the new party is the swallowing of the Democrats by the Progressives, not of the Progressives by the Democrats. With this regarded as fundamental, it is only natural that the Progressive leaders should be more enthusiastic about the logic of 1932 amalgamation than their Democratic allies, although there are several Western Democratic Senators who are quite eager to "go along." It is the Southern Democrats who cling to the so-called traditions and prin-

ciples of the party of Jefferson, Jackson, Cleveland and Wilson, even though most of them are unable to remember a tradition, point to a principle or agree on a policy.

The argument is that the Democratic party is so badly split between the Catholics and Wets of the East as represented by the Smith-Raskob element, and the Southern Protestant Drys, that anything like formidable opposition to the Republican party in the next campaign is out of the question. The party is literally broken in two, has begun to disintegrate, and the opportune moment for its disappearance has arrived. By amalgamating along coalition lines under Progressive leadership, with prohibition enforcement and agricultural relief the principles uniting West and South, the new party would be sufficiently strong in 1932 at least to stand a chance of victory, and in 1936 would surely win. This is the way a few of the Progressives dream and see visions. And when you hear them dwell upon the weaknesses of the regular Republicans, point out the vulnerable places in the old-party armor and picture the pitiful breakdown of regular leadership in the Senate, it must be admitted that the argument is not without plausibility and that the vision does not lack substance. One of them—a particularly persuasive fellow—practically had me convinced of the inevitability of the whole thing the other day. I went away from him quite enthusiastic, and it was nearly an hour before my head cleared and I realized that while the idea is attractive enough, it simply does not click.

For one thing, it is perfectly plain that a fundamental requirement for the success of any such new-party plan as this is a real leader. An outstanding and inspiring personality, a man whose leadership is undisputed and accepted, is the prime essential. For such a movement a Roosevelt is needed, or at least a LaFollette. It is equally plain that there is no such personality in either the Democratic or the Progressive wing of the coalition. There is not even a close approximation of such a leader. Neither Borah nor Norris, nor Brookhart, nor the younger LaFollette, could possibly qualify for such a role. All of them check very short. Aside from these four, there is literally no one in the Progressive camp, and on the Democratic side actually no one at all. The single outstanding Democrat in the country with a real following and of leadership stature is Al Smith, and he would be barred from the amalgamation on two grounds—his religion and his wetness. But there are other reasons for disbelief in the new-party idea. For example, there is the obvious impossibility of the Progressives' swallowing the Southern Democrats. They can do that sort of thing in the West, where Democrats are thin, scarce and diluted, but not in the South. In the South, the Democratic party is simply not swallowable. Its roots are too deep, its pride too great, the preservation of its identity too much a sectional necessity. The thing can't be done.

Then there is still another reason for disbelief in the 1932 campaign coalition of West and South—to wit, its futility. Starting off with the knowledge that such a combination would alienate the New York group, conceding the combination every possible claim—all the South, every border state, the Southwest, Northwest, and the West clear to the coast states—give it all this and there still seems no possibility of its obtaining a majority of the electoral college. As pointed out by a Washington political statistician some weeks ago, control of the electoral college is now lodged in the territory north of the Ohio and east of the Mississippi River. This will be even truer after the reapportionment of the House under the 1930 census. In other words, the new party at the maximum strength dreamed of by those who play with the notion falls short of the 266 votes necessary to elect a President, which does seem to make its formation the acme of political futility.

Taking all these things into consideration, I am inclined to dismiss the coalition as a campaign factor either this year or two years from now. There are too many reasons why Democrats and Progressives cannot effectively coalesce on prohibition and agrarian lines outside the Senate. Inside, however, they can, they do and they will. The Senate is a vital part of the government. Relatively little can be done without its consent or coöperation. They may be—the Progressives and Democrats—powerless to combine in the country as a whole and impotent when divided, but in the Senate they have seized control. Moreover, I expect to see that control tighten as this administration grows older, which means trouble in increasing quantity for Mr. H. Hoover and not very much in the way of constructive legislation for the people. The taste of power the Progressives and Democrats have had in this session is a sufficient guarantee of a continuation of their relations. No one at all posted on the Senate situation expects to see the regular Republicans again dominate the Senate, except spasmodically, during the Hoover regime. This, I repeat, greatly detracts from the strength of the administration and holds no particular promise for the country. Nevertheless, it adds vastly to the gayety of the political scene and is a salutary lesson to the Republican party, whose leaders badly needed just such a trimming as they got. It is not likely that we shall again find the legislative end of the government dominated by a group of their type, which is certainly something to cheer about.

Washington. T. R. B.

Musicals, Plain and Fancy

THE admirable critic of motion pictures for The New York Herald Tribune, Mr. Richard Watts, expressed recently his bewilderment over the use of the word "sophisticated" as applied to the product under his eye. A movie-talkie which refuses to take the sanctity of marriage seriously is called sophisticated, although it may be, as a movie-talkie, innocent of technical skill and artistic rectitude. The same thing is true of musical shows. Sophistication is the alluring surface of wit and intelligence; it has an overtone of trickiness, of mental sleight-of-hand, not seriously intended to deceive. In all the entertainments prepared for the multitude, it is an attractive quality, but I think we ought to make sure just where it should occur. As far as it suggests superiority, sophistication in these arts should reside in the skill of presentation: a new camera angle may be sophisticated when it is used to show a man saluting his flag and when used to show a man jeering at a pompous militarist; and the words and music of "None Shall Part Us from Each Other" (in "Iolanthe")

are more urbane, of a higher intellectual level, than Mr. Cole Porter's words and music concerning adultery among the lower fauna.

I think of this distinction because in "Strike Up the Band" an exceptional combination has been made of the sophistication of satire and the sophistication of method. The two butts of the satire are babbittry and patrioteering, with light quips at the expense of the American business man and a fake-operatic musical parody of the martial strain. In the second of these, George Gershwin, who is not essentially a wit in music, but possesses a good comic sense, carries over into cleverness of technique, giving us pleasure by inflating his score with what appears to be genuine feeling, and then pricking the great bubble with a sharp note, a too-insistent rhythm, or a carefully misplaced sextette. For the most part these are "added attractions" to his music which, in this score, is everything from mildly sentimental to birlliantly intricate, a resumé of everything he can do in the non-pretentious vein. The actual novelty is the arrangement of all his songs, marches, patters and incidental music into the form of a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta, avoiding by natural gift any temptation to borrow, yet adapting the form. It is quite successful.

The antics of Bobby Clark, chief comic of the show, are older, and better, than sophistication, because they are ageless. The precise things he does, such as fighting for his cigar, may be his own, but the style is that of all the great clowns, and as that style is essentially simple, I begin to wonder whether sophistication is really capable of giving us the highest intellectual pleasure. There is a scene in which four people chase one another round and round a table in a fury of anger, and all through it Clark, aware of a social fault, is lifting his hat and making introductions. The scene offers you a physical pleasure of the first order, but it also offers you the mental delight of recognizing an absurdity without wishing to destroy it—the esthetic value is higher than any in the surrounding satire.

"Fifty Million Frenchmen" is also a satiric piece, the subject being what American tourists do in Paris, but the book goes in for straight (sometimes nicely shady) comedy and leaves the intellectual appeal to the lyrics of Cole Porter. His musical gift is almost entirely that of a wit, but his talent is so great that he can take any style of popular music and write in it, reserving for his finest pieces the abundant flow of his satire. One of his old songs, "I'm in Love Again," is the exception, for while the words are cheerful and funny enough, the music is straight—not sentimental, but full of feeling. Nowadays the lyricist dominates the composer, and the effort to make innuendos audible leads him to write tunes with shorter and less interesting melodic lines. In a year or two these innuendos will become terribly stale and a new form will have to be found for jokes about sex.

If you feel the staleness already, this musical show about Americans at Zelli's and the Ritz bar will fall into its proper place as an old-fashioned piece in which the great virtue lies in the dancing. Intricate steps accomplished by a chorus in alternating black and white make up one of the finest maneuvers of the year, and the same chorus moving under changing lights, so that the color and texture of the costumes seem to vary from group to group, can create an excitement of the senses rare in shows of the type. (Both these dances, I am told, occur in a talkie and, in fact, "Fifty Million Frenchmen" is financed by a producer of talkies.)

It is easy to note the specific quality of a single dancer, but to distinguish the styles of creators of the dance, unless they do something as obvious as the drill of the Tillers, is difficult. I am confident that the best ballet dancing of the year is that directed by Tilly Losch in "Wake Up and Dream"; but I am not sure of the reason. I think it is because she has combined the European art of choreography, which gives significance to movement, with something of our own theory that movement in itself, if repeated, if done by enough girls, will give pleasure. Certainly her variety, her freshness, her wit, are not matched by the expert, somewhat hard American directors. Her nearest rival in my memory is Albertina Rasch, especially for a ravishing number in the revival of "Sari" where she has adapted her own version of the American style to the unaccustomed rhythms of gypsy-like music.

These two shows, by the way, are both old-fashioned, but of different fashions. "Wake Up and Dream" is the typical English revue with far too many sketches depending upon a quick black-out of the (fully-dressed) lover concealed in bed or cupboard and far too much singing and dancing allowed to Jack Buchanan and Jessie Matthews. "Sari" is exactly what it was sixteen years ago, and the reason it can be revived and give pleasure is that, unlike "Wake Up and Dream," it has one element which is imperishable: good music. By that I mean more than attractive melodies, of which "Sari" has its share. Like "The Chocolate Soldier" (also revived), "Sari" is the work of a composer who knows his business, who understands a style of musical composition and with his native talent creates powerfully in that style. The talent makes his particular group of songs pleasant to hear after a lapse of years, and the mastery of the style, the technical brilliance, associate the score with all the other Viennese operettas, thus giving to the curious and the knowing an additional satisfaction.

I recall being satisfied with the music of "Sons o' Guns," but after a few weeks I do not recall anything of it and my memory goes directly to its outstanding star, Jack Donahue. He is a great tap and soft-shoe dancer and an ingratiating personality. Even the combination fails to explain why "Sons o' Guns," of which he is the major part, should be so attractive. It has simplicity, it has a vast good humor about the War, and instead of satire it uses indifference and burlesque. The crucial scene is one in which the hero captures three Germans (acrobats, as they prove themselves) and then tries to send them back to their lines because he wants to go to Paris—and they refuse. It is hearty, common, good fun and the same spirit runs through an agreeable show. At moments it is set aside to let Mr. Donahue step. Experts assure me that he is the equal, at least, of Bill Robinson. Ranking apart, it is a lesson in what technique can accomplish, to watch him mount a chair and dance on the seat with a running commentary of arpeggios on the back. To ask for meaning in this type of dancing, when it is done so well, isn't exactly wise.

GILBERT SELDES.

A COMMUNICATION

Can Battleships Be Abolished Now?

SIR: Ramsay MacDonald has offered the world the first opportunity it has ever had completely to scrap a great section of its armaments. Herbert Hoover's government has blocked that program and, if it maintains its position, will completely scuttle it at London. Both of these actions are surprising, but more amazing still is the apathy of the American public.

To be sure, one does not expect the man in the street to rise up in his wrath and tell his government it is betraying his interests. Most of us believe what we are told, if we are told frequently enough. The only way to make us think and form our own judgments is to call our attention to conflicting notions of given situations. Mr. MacDonald created an unusual opportunity for public discussion and individual judgment. He made the American government's policy on battleships an issue by bringing it into the open. The administration at Washington was not grateful. It was "surprised" that the British Prime Minister should drag the whole matter before the public "in the face of the fact" that he was fully informed of the Washington government's settled opposition to his proposal. It was an embarrassing position to be placed in, and the administration had to make the best of it. Therefore the public was informed that Washington did not "expect" agreement on abolition, although the American delegation would do everything it could to secure an extended holiday in replacements and actual reduction. Naval experts had convinced the government that battleships were the "core of the fleet," the "backbone of the navy," the "infantry of the sea," and Japan felt the same way about it. The real purpose of the conference should not be clouded by too much emphasis on battleships. The American government sought reductions as well as limitation, all along the line.

This was the best sort of defense to present to the man in the street, already convinced of the high-minded purpose of his government, faced as it seemed to be by the unreasonable jealousies and selfishness of Old World nations. But one had not expected the leaders and creators of public opinion who were genuinely interested in peace and international agreement to be taken in so easily. Mr. MacDonald had offered them a perfect opportunity to make an issue of the disappointing position of the American government. One looked for a broadside in the press, from the pulpits, over the wires, on the air, demanding that Mr. Hoover and his representatives go the whole way with the British, if not farther.

Very little, if anything, happened. There were no editorials, largely because no one pointed up the issue; Washington had said there was no issue, that no agreement could be reached, and that was accepted without protest. There was not sufficient comment in the press to furnish material for a review of the battleship question in The Literary Digest. Liberal journals and peace organs felt some observations were called for, but they were not particularly concerned; they imagined that, with great astuteness, the American delegation might be creating a strong bargaining position for use later on, and they considered a prolonged holiday about all that could be expected, leaving the nations another opportunity to agree on real abolition later on. There were counsels of caution—Washington and the delegation knew what they were about and should not be embarrassed by a show of disagreement at home. Word was passed 'round that the administration was advising peace forces to refrain from open criticism lest they arouse the military factions to greater activity. Every plausible reason for inaction was discovered.

For once there is a real possibility that the nations of the world can engage in sweeping disarmament. Their governments are hard-pressed on budgets, their peoples cry out for food, shelter, employment. The huge savings that would follow the elimination of battleships would be a God-send to them, and they are willing to make the considerable sacrifice of pride and tradition that would be required. But America is "prosperous," she rolls in wealth, she can "afford" a billion-dollar navy. No other nation, no group of nations can tell her what to do—she has the economic and financial strength to outbuild any other power in the world. Her word is law. If her admirals fancy a formation of battleships surrounded by a swarm of auxiliary craft a splendid spectacle for newsreels, they can have it. If other peoples feel, then, that they must also saddle their people with this extravagant burden, that is no concern of ours. Correspondents in London and Washington reiterate, "There is no change in the American position." The hopes of the Old World are to be dashed to pieces as a sacrifice to the selfish stubbornness, the prideful vanity of the most powerful nation this earth has ever seen. The situation is, then, that the American people have not the interest, or the energy, to protest; other people dare not.

But perhaps our government isn't really contemplating such an extreme, half a hundred peace enthusiasts suggest. Undoubtedly our delegation will meet the others on battleships, if Great Britain meets our wishes on cruisers, and the French meet the British on submarines, and so on. You see, we haven't any pressing naval needs with which to barter, even parity with Great Britain has been conceded, so we create a fictitious one out of battleships to trade against the real or imagined needs of other nations. It is all extremely clever on the part of our diplomats.

There is, at least, an even chance that these optimists are foolish and deluded. There seems little doubt that the American delegation is using all of its influence to keep battleships out of the discussion, or at least to postpone consideration of them to the last, and they probably have sufficient force back of them to get their own way with the agenda. If battleships are taken up after agreement has been reached on other craft, it is clear there will be no abolition and no great reduction. Elimination of first-line ships at that time would force the conference to start at the beginning again and readjust all the schedules in the light of the changed situation, for not only the relative strength of the powers, but also the character and number of all types of fighting ships must be determined in relation to capital ship strength. The conference could not leave battleships to the last if it meant to eliminate them.

The truth is that no one really thinks the administration

is going to yield on battleships, as things now stand. Too many have reached this conclusion with equanimity, however, consoling themselves with the expectation that agreement could be reached without difficulty later, during a holiday period that can be agreed upon now. This is, indeed, optimism. No one can tell what governments will be in power during those years and, at best, the political situation within the countries concerned could hardly be more auspicious than it is today. It cannot be said too strongly that the only obstacle to agreement, NOW, is the stand of the administration at Washington, in direct contradiction to the general policies Mr. Hoover has espoused.

If there is any government that would appear to make a real sacrifice in eliminating capital ships, it is the British, and yet that course may be the only way it can secure a Mediterranean agreement that it can accept. Without such an agreement Great Britain will hardly be able to meet the very insistent American demand for reduction in cruiser strength. No matter what the actual importance of battleships may be in a future war, they are of major importance in this conference. Of all the national positions taken at London, the American opposition to capital ship abolition is the weakest and most unconvincing. It could be given up with the least sacrifice, and if it is not, graciously, there will be little bargaining power with which the American delegation can urge others to make more real sacrifices. Nothing could do so much to create a new atmosphere of trust and confidence as a change of position at Washington.

It is just possible that the administration at Washington has left the door to complete abolition cracked open. Its present position is unenviable at best, and if it is made more uncomfortable there may yet be a change. Certainly the administration will be informed of the antagonism of world opinion, and it might be responsive if there was a similar trend of feeling at home. If Mr. Hoover and Mr. Stimson intend to withdraw from their stand after it has been used for bargaining purposes, then agitation against it here cannot embarrass them—and if they do not so intend, it is time they were being embarrassed. It will be too late to discuss the matter after the delegates come home.

If there is no sweeping agreement on battleships, and if, as a consequence, there is no large success in dealing with other problems at London, we should not put all the blame upon the President and his Secretary of State; after all, they are politicians, responsive to the demands of the people they serve. Neither must too much discredit be heaped upon professional military men, trained with one outlook on life, loyal to the traditions of their service, concerned over the very existence of their profession. As for citizens, it is easy to say they should be more alert, more intelligent, more alive to public and social interests, but the fault is not in their capacity. The main responsibility will rest upon the leaders in American life who make peace, international understanding, America's foreign policy, their chief concern. Mr. MacDonald boldly created an unparalleled opportunity, but they have not grasped it; they have been compromising, dilatory, inexcusably lazy.

ROY VEATCH.

New York City.

CORRESPONDENCE

In Praise of the Coast Guard

SIR: We of the Coast Guard certainly got a "bad press" in The New Republic of January 8. I hope you were misinformed about the events at New London and that you exaggerate, but of course you are closer to the scenes you describe than I am.

But do you know that the Coast Guard does other things besides chase rum-runners? We have fourteen things to do, and the discouragement of smuggling—all smuggling, not just liquor smuggling—is only one of them. Our main job is to be a seagoing fire department, a salt-water police force and the hospital of the high seas.

During the eighteen months that the "Chelan" has been in commission, she has never seized a rum-runner, yet she has been busy and useful all the time. She is the perambulating courthouse of the Territory of Alaska and the mother ship for commercial aviation all the way from here to Behring Strait. We helped the "Land of the Soviets" make her trip, we stood by for the "Graf Zeppelin," and last Christmas we took up a load of airplanes for the Carl Ben Eielson search—thereby becoming the first airplane carrier in the Coast Guard.

Now and then we pull a disabled ship to port or rescue somebody from a marine disaster. We visit the various fishing fleets and give them medical service. Coast Guard cutters protect the seals of the Pribilof Islands from extinction and do an endless amount of fetching and carrying for the Eskimos and Aleuts. We take school teachers up there, and doctors. And when anybody commits a crime in Alaska he has to time it by our sailing schedule so we can take him to Seward for trial.

Honest, the bribes I've taken and the throats I've cut could be counted on the fingers of one hand. Believe it or not, I've been following this racket for quite a long time and I've seen just one bootlegger. At least they said he was a bootlegger; the people I was with pointed him out on the public street in San Francisco, and since everybody else was watching him I thought I'd gawk, too.

Really, for every life the Coast Guard has taken I bet we've saved a hundred—and good lives, at that. I reprobate official lawlessness as much as anybody in the world, but let's consider the whole picture.

MANUEL BOY FRANK.

Coast Guard Cutter "Chelan," Seattle, Wash.

A Letter to Cardinal O'Connell

SIR: I am enclosing a letter which may be of interest to readers of The New Republic.

UPTON SINCLAIR.

Pasadena, Calif.

[ENCLOSURE]

William, Cardinal O'Connell,
Holy Cross Cathedral,
Boston, Mass.
Dear Sir:

I note a newspaper report of your sermon in which you call upon reformers and believers in public causes to follow the example of Christ, who "gave the commission to His church to teach, to influence by word and example, in His spirit of gentleness and moderation."

The remainder of the quotation makes clear that you are referring to the prohibition law. You are protesting against the use of the police power to suppress the traffic in booze. That is your opinion, and you have a perfect right to advocate it, in church or out. But I note what seems to be a great inconsistency, and I am moved to ask you to explain.

Not so long ago I read a letter from a woman, the mother of eight children by a husband who did not obey the prohibition law. This woman wished to avoid having more children by a drunken husband. She could not support the children, and she appealed for knowledge about birth control. Anyone who sent her this knowledge would have been breaking the law, and becoming liable to a long jail sentence. As it happens, this law is approved

by your church, and has been supported by you in many sermons. Can you not understand how strange it seems to an outsider that a shepherd of Christ should support the right of the booze interests to make drunk the husband of this woman, while denying to the woman the precious knowledge which would free her from slavery, and free society from having to take care of the defective progeny of a drunkard?

It happens that I am the author of a novel called "Oil." In the course of that novel one of the characters refers to the possibility of birth control. He does not give any information as to how to practise it; yet, because of the mere statement that birth control can be practised, the sale of "Oil" was banned in the city of Boston, and I am reliably informed that the action was taken upon the initiative of the Catholics. I know that it was a Catholic superintendent of police who arrested me for selling the book, and a Catholic district attorney who told my lawyer that he would personally see to it that I got six months in jail. It is generally reported and believed in Boston that these Catholic officials are inspired by you in this matter, and it is well known that you have denounced birth control on many occasions. I ask you, in all sincerity, to explain to me what is the difference, and the reason for your inconsistency in this matter. You wish to deal with bootleggers and wholesale makers and sellers of alcoholic poisons after the fashion of Christ, "to teach, to influence by word and example, in His spirit of gentleness and moderation." Why are you not willing to employ the same Christly means in dealing with those who teach birth control? Why do you favor going after them with a $5,000 fine and a five-year jail sentence?

I note that in defense of the booze traffic you denounce what you call "a frantic and futile attempt to compel virtue by statute." Why do you not apply the same logic to the effort to suppress birth control? Why is all your religious ardor poured out in defense of bootleggers, and none in the defense of the elementary right of men and women to seek knowledge, and to communicate it to others?

I ask you these questions in entire good faith. I am not the only one who is puzzled by the attitude of yourself and your church. This letter will be read by millions of both Catholics and non-Catholics all over the world. I hope, therefore, that you will take occasion to make me a frank answer, and I promise in advance to give it out for publication, complete and unabridged. As it happens, I really believe in using the methods of Christ in defense of my beliefs. I am perfectly willing for the other side to have a hearing; and, no matter how wrong or dangerous I may consider certain ideas, I have never had the wish to send anybody to jail for advocating them.

UPTON SINCLAIR.

More About the Public Defender

SIR: I read Dr. Charles L. Bane's letter in your issue of January 1, anent my letter on "The Public Defender" published by you on November 27.

His statement that the Public Defender idea "will make for complication" of judicial procedure, is not only unsound in principle—but it is challenged by the efficiency and economy of the Public Defender's office wherever it has been tested.

Dr. Bane fears that the Public Defender will seek too many acquittals. He would not seek acquittals any more than would private defense counsel. As a sworn public official, he will be less prone to interpose unmerited or technical defenses than private counsel.

Under our law, the accused is innocent until proved guilty. He has a constitutional right to counsel. The only difference between assigned counsel who serves without pay—and is often incompetent or indifferent—and the Public Defender is that public defense will assure to the poor man an able and experienced lawyer—thereby tending toward that "equality before the law" which is his fundamental right. Poverty should not occasion an unfair discrimination at the bar of justice. Prosecution and defense must have equal opportunities.

But, says Dr. Bane, "in reality there are no two sides to a criminal case." This theory has the merit of novelty. Coming from a doctor of philosophy, it is quite startling. He argues that lawyers and juries are quite superfluous. I respectfully dissent from his viewpoint.

Although stating that there are "no two sides to the controversy," Dr. Bane suggests that judges might better put the "*conflicting evidence*" together and reach a more logical conclusion than "the average juror handicapped by two opposing lawyers."

Dr. Bane, in admitting that there is "conflicting evidence," rebuts his theory "that there are no two sides." We know from human experience that there are two sides to nearly every question. Where human life or liberty is at stake, the ascertainment of the truth is paramount.

Dr. Bane would have the judges "trained not only in the law as at present, but in the new social sciences as well—psychology, sociology, criminology, etc." Assuming that judges possess such professional equipment, juries as judges of facts, and lawyers to present the facts and the law, would still be necessary. The jury system—unsatisfactory in some respects—still remains a bulwark of our liberties. No judge should be permitted to usurp its function.

I agree that "the function of the modern court should be to ascertain the cause and the extent of the infraction of the law and to work out a readjustment between the offender and the social group"—but to obtain that result by eliminating lawyers and juries is not only fundamentally unsound, but would tend to judicial tyranny and be fraught with the gravest danger to the individual.

Dr. Bane is convinced that legal reforms like the Public Defender "must originate outside the legal profession." It may interest him to know that the Public Defender proposal has received the enthusiastic endorsement of psychologists, sociologists, criminologists and doctors of philosophy, as an effective instrument for justice.

MAYER C. GOLDMAN.

New York City.

Canada and the U. S. A.

SIR: In your issue of December 4, 1929, Mr. William York expresses some very poignant views of us which are all too true and should offend no American. Our outstanding national fault is our inability to see ourselves as others see us—and particularly our nearest neighbors.

How any intelligent person could place any other interpretation on the "Lindbergh flight" to Quebec than the Hon. L. A. Taschereau did is beyond my understanding. It was a publicity stunt and nothing else. Such publicity stunts nauseate Americans as well as Canadians.

Our Canadian neighbors have a real right to kick over some of the matters mentioned by Mr. York.

The flagrant discrimination against the Canadian dollar is one of them. It is an outrage.

The St. Lawrence Waterway dream is another. The whole scheme is a colossal joke from any viewpoint and it is my guess that Canada will never be inveigled into such a proposition.

It is about time that we awakened and treated our Canadian neighbors as decent neighbors ought to be treated.

ROY D. GARNER.

Providence, R. I.

SIR: The article of William York, "As a Canadian Sees Us," in your issue of December 4, gives an entirely erroneous description of the opinion of Americans held by Canadians. When Lindbergh flew to New York City for serum which the Prime Minister of Quebec angrily protested, could have been obtained at a dozen hospitals in Quebec, Canadians outside of Quebec laughed good-humoredly and when it transpired that the very particular serum required could not be obtained outside New York City it was plain that the Prime Minister had been needlessly ruffled and that Quebec was no more open to ridicule than any state of the United States. To found an article asserting that we are jealous of the United States on that incident is absurd. The relations between Americans and Canadians in Canada, where millions come yearly, are of the best and any statement to the contrary is untrue.

J. H. BURNHAM.

Peterborough, Can.

The City of Tomorrow

The Metropolis of Tomorrow, by Hugh Ferriss. New York: Ives Washburn. 142 pages. $7.50.

Our Cities Today and Tomorrow: A Survey of Planning and Zoning Progress in the United States, by Theodora Kimball Hubbard and Henry Vincent Hubbard. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 389 pages. $5.

The City of Tomorrow and Its Planning, by Le Corbusier. Translated by Frederick Etchells. New York: Payson and Clarke. 302 pages. $7.50.

AS A FACT the city has always been with us; but conscious thought about the city is a product largely of the last thirty years. The Utopian writers were the first to recognize its place in the social economy; in this, a More or a Buckingham, or even a Fourier, were far in advance of their "scientific" brethren; but it required the wholesale lapses and devitalizations of the nineteenth-century city to set men's thoughts about the city in motion. Although planned cities existed in America from the beginning, the modern city-planning movement dates back no further than the eighties; the effort to create civic centers and to control the esthetic sides of the city's development came slightly later; while during the last decade the engineer has suddenly taken charge of the situation and accumulated vast masses of fact, some of it relevant and some of it mere statistical flatulence, on the technical aspects of city growth, particularly the circulation of traffic and the provisions for transportation. All this stir is a welcome sign, not because our achievements have been great or because the quality of our thinking has been high; but because at least a beginning has been made. At last the pie is opened, even if the birds have not yet begun to sing.

The three books now before us represent admirably three aspects of current thought about cities; and if we wish to achieve a better orientation we cannot do better than consider their virtues and defects. Mr. Ferriss' text and pictures embody the common megalopolitan dream: they represent a sort of elephantiasis of the imagination. The basis of the dream is the actual skyscraper of today, a product of technology, credit economy, human greed and social ineptitude; the assumption underlying these grandiose structures is that they represent the pinnacle of beauty and economy in modern civilization: if so, why not make them bigger and higher and more ubiquitous? So powerful is this vulgar dream that even the decent and otherwise enlightened technicians for the New York Committee on Regional Plan have fallen under it: the naïve fantasies of the business man now come back to him with the prestige of city-planning "authority."

Let us not deceive ourselves: a close inspection of Mr. Ferriss' draughtsmanship, charming and effective though it often is, will point out the fundamental dishonesty of his picture of the metropolis of tomorrow. Almost every skyscraper that Mr. Ferriss renders is under false illumination: the top of the structure is dark; the bottom of the building is swept by a great gust of light. I daresay that Mr. Ferriss has reversed the natural lighting on his buildings, which in actuality produce deep wells of darkness, for purely theatrical reasons; but this merely points to the fact that his conception of the city is no closer to the thing that exists than Dante's picture of the Inferno; rather less so, because Dante portrayed perfectly recognizable states of human viciousness, whereas Mr. Ferriss has no hesitation in upsetting the laws of physics, in order to make these monstrous structures look a little less hostile. Another point: the essential character of our modern architecture is a certain hardness of definition; but in Mr. Ferriss' presentation all this is softened, sometimes almost smudged; and the tone of the picture, if not the subject, gives one a sense of gentle loveliness, as of willow branches falling in a cloudy spray over the river's edge. If in mist and rain the metropolis of today occasionally takes on just this kind of loveliness, that is a happy accident, and not the constant character of the place: the direct physical effect of the metropolis is appropriately rendered in Lozowick's hard lithographs, whilst its disintegrating effect upon the spirit has been captured in Marin's etchings. Mr. Ferriss, nevertheless, deserves our thanks for reflecting so faithfully the painfully childish romanticism of our modern financial leaders: the very method he uses to portray the dream persuades us that the reality which would correspond to it would be a nightmare

"Our Cities Today and Tomorrow" is quite a different kind of work Since the late Professor Charles Zueblin's books on American municipal progress, which covered a somewhat different field, there has been something of a gap in the current estimates of city-planning work, despite annual reports, digests and tabulations; and the present book fills a useful place. Perhaps a third of the work has information of a merely factual nature, describing the various agencies for city planning, the functions of different organizations, the means used for educational campaigns. The remaining part is devoted to an account of the city-planning movement in relation to street planning, zoning, ways of dealing with traffic and transportation, parks and playgrounds, civic centers. On the critical side, the authors have not ventured to go very far; and the final chapter on "Lines of Future Progress: The Stumbling Blocks to be Surmounted" concerns itself too much with superficial difficulties, such as petty politics, unwillingness to take a large view of public problems and poor technical advice. While the authors mention poverty as another one of the obstacles, one sees by their illustrations that they mean temporary municipal poverty, like that due to a fire in Fall River or burdensome municipal annexations in Pittsburgh; and they do not sufficiently take into account the greater stumbling blocks in our economic system—the effect of credit economy and land gambling on congestion, the instability of functions due to hopes of a continuous turnover, the inability of the working class to demand sound housing, and a hundred other deeper obstacles that cramp the style of even the most enlightened city-planning commissions.

While the authors deliberately restricted their study and avoided going into both housing and the building of new towns, it seems to me that their decision was an unwise one. The cutting edge of the city-planning movement is now in such experimental units as Mariemont and Sunnyside and Radburn; they perform a work parallel to that achieved in education by the experimental schools; and an appraisal of tomorrow's tendencies must be incomplete without a reckoning of their failures and successes.

Le Corbusier's conception of the city of tomorrow is different from that of Messrs. Hugh Ferriss, Harvey Wiley Corbett and Company; and it is much sounder. Le Corbusier himself is perhaps the most influential figure in the modern architectural movement in Europe; as a practising architect, he was one of the first to attempt the "rationalization" of the modern dwelling house; but his influence derives less from his architecture, which is inferior to that of some of his followers, than from his ability as a polemic writer. "The City of Tomorrow" is similar in tone and

style to "Towards a New Architecture," which was published in America last year: it is a series of loosely coördinated harangues, arguments, projects, attacks. Le Corbusier is against antiquarianism, sentimentalism, handicraft, irregular contours in the landscape, organic planning and growth, historical and regional traditions: he is in favor of the machine, bareness, geometry, hanging gardens—which he quaintly prefers to those which are closer to the earth—flat surfaces and mathematical simplicity.

In his actual creations, Le Corbusier is as romantic as the worst builder of Norman turrets; for, on behalf of geometry or the machine, he is prepared to ignore the economies that derive from respecting the character of a terrain or adapting human purposes to the natural situation. Even his errors, however, are clearly and boldly expressed; and there is far less danger from Le Corbusier at the most dogmatic worst than there is from current pictures of the future city in terms of the Arabian Nights. The logical arrangement of the business districts, traffic arteries, cafes, public amusements and residences in Le Corbusier's city of the future is admirable; although it is possible that the creation of specialized sub-centers of business in the surrounding garden cities, instead of the large-scale concentration proposed by Le Corbusier, would permit lower buildings and lessen the amount of unnecessary commutation. But Le Corbusier's method is excellent. Instead of starting with the tangle of compromises and vested interests and ancient habits that make up the modern city, he begins with the essential functions to be served, and creates a schematic city capable of meeting these requirements. This habit of mind, perhaps the finest contribution of Beaux Arts training, is one that has only rarely been exhibited in the American city-planning movement; but it is badly needed here, for it is an essential complement to those strictly factual investigations we now make, which, though admirable in their fidelity to fact, have the effect of paralyzing the will and the imagination, and causing the resultant plan to be conspicuous for its superficiality and impotence.

Despite Le Corbusier's blind spots, his exposition of the City of Tomorrow is a good starting point for anyone who wishes to realize how the modern means of living can—without retreating into a pre-industrial order or indulging narcotic dreams of a time when everyone would live on the upper stories of vast skyscrapers—be adapted to a more humane mode of life.

LEWIS MUMFORD.

A Prophetess of Reform

Elizabeth Gaskell, by Gerald DeWitt Sanders. With a bibliography by Clark S. Northup. New Haven: Yale University Press. 267 pages. $3.50.

MRS. GASKELL was a woman of shrewd wit and sympathy. Falling short of Jane Austen's humorous genius and the tragic vision of the Brontës, she fairly deserves her place beside Jane Carlyle and Harriet Martineau among the brilliant women of her century. To her the novel was not so much a form of art as an instrument for self-expression and for voicing the needs of the age. In "Mary Barton" and "North and South" (to a lesser degree in "Ruth") she gave portraits of changing England in the Chartism days which have assumed documentary importance. Her championship of the worker was as generous as her resources for friendship and charity. On the model of her Parisian friend, Mme. Mohl, she held the first real literary salon Manchester had known. Her "Life of Charlotte Brontë," in spite of its apologetic injustices, remains a classic, praised by Shorter for its honesty, though by Harold Nicholson only for its art. Her rarest literary virtues appear in the delicate charm of "Cranford," "Cousin Phyllis," "My Lady Ludlow" and "Wives and Daughters"—tales of domestic sensibility which carry us from the world of "Pride and Prejudice" to that of "Orley Farm." Yet her ambitious mission was that of reformer, and her thesis novels are her first claim to serious investigation.

For giving the best account of available biographical details, Professor Sanders deserves praise, as does Professor Northup for an exhaustive bibliography. Their book will be indispensable to students, for in both departments it outranks Mr. Whitfield's recent biography, published in England. But Professor Sanders, acknowledging the handicap imposed on him by Mrs. Gaskell's injunction against a "Life," submits his work not as a biography, but as a study of the works, and as such its shortcoming are patent. Although he avoids the intolerable archness of Mr. Whitfield's style, his remarks on the moral recommendations of the novels rarely miss the note of homily. By the cautious pedestrianism of his approach, he minimizes the historical value of the novels, particularly of a comparative social analysis like "North and South." He fails to substantiate the documentary claims of the social studies by examining journalistic and official records. And in spite of scholarly diligence and an available apparatus of reference, he leaves more than one allusion or comparison unspecified. Except for a few brief essays like May Sinclair's and Marjorie Bald's, and M. Cazamian's pioneer chapter in "Le Roman Social en Angleterre" which appeared in 1904, Professor Sanders gives the best account thus far of a neglected novelist. But at best it must be a stop-gap until a study worthy of Mrs. Gaskell's importance as artist and humanitarian eventually appears.

MORTON DAUWEN ZABEL.

The Mystery Man Unmasked

The Mystery Man of Europe: Sir Basil Zaharoff, by Richard Lewinsohn. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. 241 pages. $3.

IN a way it is a pity that a biography of Sir Basil Zaharoff should have been written. Zaharoff has been the mystery man of Europe so long that one would like to keep him so; there is something stimulating in the idea of a mystery man pulling strings, snooping around incognito, and in general being the man behind all the remaining thrones. Sir Basil had all the qualifications of an A Number One mystery man: his origin was obscure; he never spoke of his past; he was immensely wealthy, he owned Monte Carlo; he married at seventy-five the woman with whom he had been in love for half a century only to lose her a few months later; no one had ever seen him in the flesh. And now along comes Dr. Lewinsohn, the old ferret, and tells us just how Sir Basil made his money, how he got his title, where he was born, and, crowning indignity, inserts several photographs of a rather stodgy-looking old gentleman with a beard. The mysterious Zaharoff turns out to be a munitions magnate, a war profiteer with a strong prejudice against the artist class. Beyond this the author does not reveal much about the man, although he gives a detailed account of the activities of the great munitions firms during the War. The deliberate provoking of war in order to make money is not an endearing occupation, and those engaged in it do not make very interesting material for biography.

GEOFFREY T. HELLMAN.

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Notes on Novels

The Embezzlers, by Valentine Kataev. New York: The Dial Press. $2.50.

IF for no other reason than that this novel represents an aspect of Soviet fiction which is unfamiliar in America, "The Embezzlers" deserves to be known to our reading public. In the past we have had only the more serious fiction translated. Gladkov, Pilniak, Ivanov, Libedinsky, Semenov we have had, but almost always in their more intense vein. "The Embezzlers" is clever comedy. The whole novel revolves about the adventures of Philip Stephanovitch Prohoroff, a finance accountant in the Soviet employ, and his cashier young Ivan, who embezzle the state funds and then set forth on a wild tear which, after much fun in buying and spending, ends in a court conviction. The main interest is to be found in the story of the many ridiculous and impossible exploits of the embezzlers themselves, who are more like boys who have escaped from school than men who have absconded with state funds. Somehow one never feels in reading the novel that the two miscreants have committed a serious crime at all. It is as if they had gone off on a spree with a hundred dollars of their fathers' money, or been guilty of some even slighter peccadillo. In managing to sustain this illusion even to the end, Kataev has saved his novel from falling into that sentimentality which so often weakens this type of fiction in its final pages. If, due to this very virtue, he has failed somewhat in his satire, he has not failed in his fun. V. F. C.

The Sleeping Fury, by Martin Armstrong. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

MODERN fiction has so accustomed us to the reality of post-War morality, or the lack of it, that it is difficult to return to a more conventional outlook. In Mr. Armstrong's novel, "The Sleeping Fury," one is constantly astonished at his melodramatic attitude, for "little Nell" is never done wrong by. The characters move through the story with a sort of wooden unreality which a little cheerful sinning might help to animate. We find Lady Charlotte Mardale at fifty, married to a gentle parson, regretting her own missed ecstasy. All her interest in life is centered in her daughter Sylvia, who falls in love with a golden-haired lad so similar to the object of her mother's buried passion that the ghost walks again for Charlotte. We delve into her tranquil and commonplace past (which is by far the most convincing part of the story) and scarcely flutter when her hero arrives and vanishes in a brief, golden mist. Sylvia never comes to life at all. Her beau turns out to be an illegitimate child, and Lady Mardale and her parson fight out the moral issue involved to the bitter end. The pictures of English countryside and home life are delightful and real, but the "fury" remains sleeping. J. C.

Low Run Tide and Lava Rock: Two Novels in One Volume, by Elliot Paul. New York: Horace Liveright. $2.50.

A MAINE fishing village and a construction camp in the Far West are the respective milieus of these two novels. The activities of the characters in one book naturally differ completely from those of the people in the other, yet there is a fundamental sameness. The descendants of sailing masters, deprived by progress of their ancestral calling, catch herring and raise blueberries with the

same indifference to fate as that with which the western dam builders, agents of progress, face the dangers of blasting and construction. Nature dominates both groups: the three-hundred-year-old inbred New England community, and the shifting, polyglot crowd at Boise Valley are alike enveloped in an immense calm that makes all their actions seem inconsequential. Mr. Paul's method of writing heightens this deadening effect. He writes simply: subject, verb, object. Rarely does he use any involved or complex construction; "the" is his favorite word for beginning a sentence, nor does he mind introducing four or five successive sentences in this way. Occasionally he carries simplicity to the point of awkwardness, as here: "The principal landing is near the crossroads so that the wagons from all the surrounding countryside and the boats that venture up from the bay bring up naturally at this central meeting place and it was there that Captain Verenus Plummer's general store was located." But in general his style accentuates the quiet rhythm of his characters' lives.

G. T. H.

Three Against Fate, by Mary Agnes Hamilton. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.50.

IN spite of bringing in all the thundering elements of a murder trial in wartime London, Miss Hamilton is never melodramatic; where her story might have been sentimental and maudlin, it is grim and authentic. Perhaps it is through her close association with men as a Labor member of Parliament that she has succeeded in seeing these things with the eyes of a man. Jean, whose husband suffers more tragically through his slow spiritual disillusionment than if he had been killed outright, becomes the epitome of all women who experienced the same fate. In the Lancashire mill-town where she has gone after her marriage, she hears the meaningless rallying of men for the honor of their country, the boasts of self-satisfied women about their little sacrifice, the fatuous and benighted speeches of men too old to go into active service. Gradually she realizes the true character of the War and its part in her own life. Through excursions into the past during the trial of her husband, her whole life finally lies before us, with the War playing the part of the true murderer. It is a story at once illuminating and devastating; it will stand in its own right beside the records of the men, who could have learned no more of the meaning of the War through their actual presence in the trenches. E. F.

Contributors

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH is the author of "Streets in the Moon" and "The Hamlet of A. MacLeish."

JOHN LANGDON-DAVIES is a distinguished English writer and lecturer on political and sociological subjects. His latest book, "Man and His Universe," is to be published this spring.

PAUL H. DOUGLAS is professor of Industrial Relations at the University of Chicago.

ROY VEATCH has recently finished graduate work on international relations at the Robert Brookings School in Washington.

MORTON DAUWEN ZABEL is professor of English literature at Loyola University and associate editor of Poetry: A Magazine of Verse.

GEOFFREY T. HELLMAN is a member of the editorial staff of the New Yorker, and one of the editors of The Miscellany, a new literary magazine.

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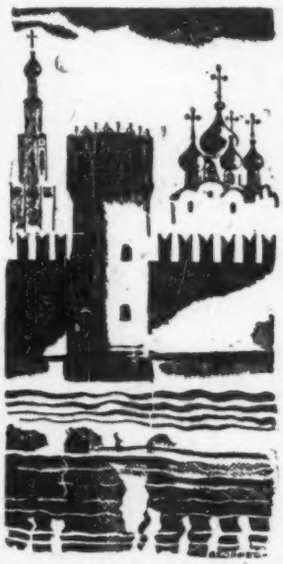

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